

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

This section should be completed following ratification of the Policy.

	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of the Performance Committee	Liz White		October 2021
Chief Executive Officer	Paul Watson		October 2021
Chair of the Trust Board	Becky Hickford		October 2021
Recommended Review Date:	October 2022		

## Ownership

Preston Hedge's Primary School is responsible for the production and maintenance of this document. It is issued by the Clerk, Catherine.gautrey@prestonhedges.org to whom any change requests or queries should be directed.

## Version Control

This document is issued and maintained in accordance with Preston Hedge's Primary School procedures. Any change to the document will increase its version number. It is the responsibility of the reader to check with the Clerk that this is a currently valid copy.

Version	Date	Description of Change	Changed By
1	2008	Initial policy drawn up	Unknown
2	2010	Policy revision and update	Andy Palmer
2.1	2010	Small Amendment	Lyn Eastop
2.2	2010	Minor amendments	Lyn Eastop
3	2013	In light of changes in legislation	P Watson
SWB 1	2017	Policy update	P Watson /SWB Committee
SWB 2	2018	Policy update including September 18 update from KCSIE	LJenkins/ P Watson/ Exec team
P1	2019	Annual Review	Executive Team
2	2020	Annual Review	Executive Team & Performance Committee
3	2021	Annual Review	Executive Team & Performance Committee

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Preston Hedge's Academy Trust our aim is to make sure that all pupils attend school as fully as possible in the times regulated. We should make it clear that regular attendance and punctuality is essential for all pupils if they are to be successful. We give parents frequent updates on attendance matters and local issues that affect them. Our reports state the attendance record for each pupil, including absences and late attendances, ask for parental comments and extends an invitation to contact a named member of staff if they have any concerns.

## **Expectations.**

Every Parent/Carer should be aware of our expectations with regard to notification when a child is absent. All pupils should be at school at the allotted time ready for registration and any absences reported as early as possible. All staff should report any absences so that follow up action can be taken by the appropriate staff. If a child is not collected by 3.30pm a call should be made to their parents to establish when they will be collected.

## **Aims**

Each school must encourage and assist all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality, reducing absence and persistent absence It is important that teachers and parents are aware that good attendance is essential for pupils to maximise their achievement and attainment at school.

We pay full and due regard to implementing "School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities August 2020."

## **Responsibilities**

### **Parents/Carers**

All Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed in full uniform and in a fit condition to learn. If for any reason a child is prevented from attending, parents must notify the school on the first day of absence before registration. If the school does not receive notification of a child's absence by the end of registration, the main parent/carers will be contacted by telephone that morning and asked to provide the reason for their child's absence, and giving an indication of when the child is likely to return to school.

A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been received from a parent/carers.

If any pupil's attendance is a cause for concern the parents/carers will be contacted by the Principal, another Senior Leader or the DSL.

If this does not lead to an improvement in attendance, the school will refer to the Education Inclusion.

Northants: [Support with a child's attendance issues - Schools and education \(northamptonshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/education/school-attendance)

Milton Keynes:

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## [School Attendance - Milton Keynes Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](http://milton-keynes.gov.uk)

Parents/Carers should inform the school of any changes of circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.

Parents whose first language is not English or who have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren) if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

### **Pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually in full school uniform. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support to rectify any problems.

### **School**

All staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance including punctuality is the responsibility of all school staff and parents. The school will work in partnership to resolve any issues surrounding absence or lateness to improve the educational opportunities and welfare of the child.

- Where a pupil is persistently late regardless of time of arrival, contact is made with the parents. Where there are concerns that the absence and lateness links to a vulnerable child, leaders may make a Safeguarding referral sooner.
- When leaders in the school have taken all the necessary steps and there has not been an improvement in attendance or punctuality, the Principal may decide it is appropriate to refer the case to the Educational Inclusion Team or Attendance Officer for the county.

### **School Leaders**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
  - Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers.
  - Ensure that with good teaching and learning experiences it will encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
  - Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure the policy is reviewed regularly.
  - Ensure trends in absence data and punctuality are analysed regularly by School Leaders. Concerns that arise are then communicated to the local school community, via newsletters and other means of school communication. This means that all parents are fully informed of the school's concerns and are aware impacting positively on the issue.
  - The Principal is expected to monitor attendance of pupils with less than 95% separately. Running regular reports to ensure that actions are taken to swiftly address their attendance.
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- Leaders in the Trust's schools consistently consider absence, monitoring it frequently to identify pupil's whose absence is causing concern. Where monitoring identifies a concern, the school will investigate any absenteeism promptly, liaising closely with parents. When a pupil's attendance drops below 90% for a period of one term, after December, the Principal will write to the parents asking for an improvement, which will then be monitored over the subsequent two terms. If the Principal has concerns about a pupil's attendance or they have a history of poor attendance, the Principal will make contact earlier than December.
- The attendance of pupils in receipt of pupil premium will be monitored separately. School leaders will make every effort to ensure the attendance of pupil premium pupils is at least in line with non-disadvantaged pupils and at 95% as a group of pupils. Individual attendance targets for each school for all pupils, will be set by the Performance Committee annually and monitored accordingly.

#### **The Trust Performance Committee**

- To ensure that each of its schools fulfils its duties as defined in this attendance policy.
- To review the attendance figures against school targets at each meeting. This should include analysis of overall attendance, pupil premium attendance, late attendance, unauthorised absence and persistent absence at each school.
- To ensure that where attendance is falling in one of its schools or below the individual school, objective, that it ensures Trust and school leaders take steps to swiftly address this concern.
- Where there is an ongoing concern around attendance an action plan is implemented and reviewed at each meeting.
- Review the Trust's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

#### **Registration**

All registers will be taken within 10 minutes of school opening and immediately at the start of the afternoon session and then passed to the office for confirmation of absences with telephone or verbal messages from parents/carers. Where no notification is received from a parent or carer, our Office Staff will endeavour to contact them to confirm the nature of the absence. Any concerns that the Office Staff have will be raised with the Principal, School Leaders or DSLs as appropriate. Any continuing problems with absence will be drawn to the Principal's attention to be followed up with contact of the parents/carers. Please see section on Children missing in education for further details.

#### **Legal framework**

- This policy takes into account the Human Rights act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.
  - Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure that pupils of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
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- A pupil is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A pupil ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

*(A child is of "compulsory school age" on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> April or 1<sup>st</sup> September following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Children becoming 5 years old between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> March are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1<sup>st</sup> April.*

*Children becoming 5 years old between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1<sup>st</sup> September*

*Children becoming 5 years old between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1<sup>st</sup> January).*

- Under the education act 1996, The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for pupils of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was

- : present
- : absent
- : present at approved educational activity; or
- : unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- : School attendance Statutory guidance and departmental advice August 2013

### **Categorising absence**

- Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone or verbal message on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. Sometimes written confirmation will be requested.
- Absence will be categorised as follows:

### **Illness**

In most cases a telephone call/ message on the absence line or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illnesses, or persistent absence.

### **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to occasions where there is a cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances. Please see the list below:

### **Allowed absence in exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Principal)**

- Medical – Any appointment resulting in your child missing morning or afternoon registration
  - Religious or Faith observance
  - Bereavement/Compassionate
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- Family Wedding/Civil Partnership Date (a maximum of 3 days can be authorised where the wedding is abroad, please see the website for further information)
- Family crisis
- Examination off site
- Educational Activity – Sport or Performance Activity
- Attendance required by another public organisation including a school
- Family relocation visit
- Other exceptional circumstance

#### **Absence not allowed under any circumstances**

- Family holiday
- Family trips
- Leaving school early to travel to an event

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completing the 'Trust Absence form' which can be downloaded from our school website. **The Principal** will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time. Please be aware that the local authority has been given jurisdiction to impose fines for unauthorised absence and schools may be asked to report unauthorised absence. For absence relating to illness of five days or more, schools may request a doctor's note to confirm the absence.

Where the family are travelling abroad – authorised or not – the school may request proof of return travel. (Within Europe when the stay exceeds five days, every time during school time travel is beyond Europe). This will need to be provided to the school promptly upon request. This is more likely if you are travelling for an extended duration. This is a measure that we apply across the Trust to keep children safe.

All requests for leave of absence must be completed on the Trust Absence Request form.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, the school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the pupil will lose their school place.

#### **Religious Observance**

The Trust acknowledges the multi faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. Parent/carers are requested to give notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent for such occasions. Any pupils arriving ten minutes after the start of the school day or after the start of the afternoon session will be marked as late. Unless, there has been a problem with transport of which the school has been notified.

#### **Deletions from the Register.**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
  - Death of a pupil
  - Transfer between schools
  - Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
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- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

### **Children Missing from Education**

(taken from the Safeguarding & Child Protection & Policy – see policy for further details)

Principals/ DSL/ DDSL must have a good understanding of the full guidance for Children Missing in Education.

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures as noted below.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Staff MUST report to the DSL/ DDSL, a child who is missing/ has unexplained absence swiftly and the office team are most well placed to do this if they become concerned around specific circumstances. Additionally, poor attendance, patterns of absence or persistent lateness should be discussed with the DSL/ DDSL to ensure that the issue is/ can be investigated.

In the event a child is missing, and further investigations do not satisfy the DSL/DDSLS, we will follow the procedures in place for Northamptonshire or Milton Keynes as appropriate.

The Principals monitor attendance and liaise with the DSL/DDSLS to ensure pupils are attending school and any concerning patterns of attendance are addressed. Our office teams are key in recognising attendance patterns and there is an expectation that they pass information on swiftly.

The school follows the guidance for the removal of pupils from our registers. Additionally, we must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or at intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

On the morning of absence, the office staff must contact the family. If there is no response, all other held contact details should be used to establish that the child is off ill

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(and safe). If no other channels of communication are effective, the school must conduct a home visit the same day.

Reasonable steps may including asking neighbours if they know where a family is, (you must show your identity badge and always attend with another member of school staff). The Trust has this policy, in part, due to tragic events seen in the news where something has happened to the parent and then, as a consequence, the child.

The Trust expects all schools to go beyond the legal minimum and take every step to hold more than one emergency contact number. KCSIE states that this is good practice as it allows a school to make contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing from education or if there is a welfare and/ or safeguarding concern.

### **Using Attendance Data**

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority/DFE and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to implement school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

All information shared will be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018

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