



Attendance Policy

Approved by the Board and authorised for use 1st September 2022.

History of Policy Changes

Date	Version	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
September 2017	1			
July 2018	2	Re-write of previous policy	Review of Policy	Pete Noble
May 2019	3	Changes made to clarify specific terms	Review of policy	Jacqui Scott
January 2022	4		Review of policy	Jacqui Scott
June 2022	5		Annual Review	Sarah Gibbon

This policy applies to The Priory Learning Trust and its academies with each Academy adopting their bespoke procedures.

Date policy adopted	September 2022
Review cycle	Annual
Review date	September 2024

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Policy Statement

It is the policy of The Priory Learning Trust (TPLT) that all students attend lessons. High standards of attendance are central to the TPLT's objective of aiming for excellence in all aspects of school life. Strong and effective management of attendance and working in partnership with parents is essential to the establishment and maintenance of acceptable standards of attendance.

Aims

- To maximise attendance rates to achieve at least national average or better in secondary and primary schools;
- To reduce the number of persistent non-attendeers (students with 90% attendance or less);
- To acquaint parents with their responsibility for ensuring regular attendance;
- To set the culture that unjustified absence will not be tolerated;
- To support parents in ensuring that their children arrive at school on time;
- To maintain attendance registers as required by law.

Review Data

The Trustee's Scrutiny Panel, meets three times in an academic year, in which the trustees meet with the Principal and the Chair of the Academy Council to examine the following data:

- Attendance and absence data by codes, broken down by year group and compared to previous years;
- Attendance and persistent absence data by groups, i.e.
 - Pupil Premium;
 - non- Pupil Premium;
 - Special Educational Needs and Disability;
 - non- Special Educational Needs and Disability;
 - Support
 - Education Health Care Plan;
 - Free School Meals;
 - non- Free School Meals;
 - English As Language;
 - non- English As Language;
 - Ethnicity

Attendance Protocol

First day contact:

First day contact is an integral part of the whole school attendance policy to ensure students are safeguarded. Parents/carers and students must realise that a student's absence will be noted and acted upon swiftly. This will make students more reluctant to be absent. First day contact sends a clear message to students and parents that attendance is very important.

Parents/Carers:

- Parents/carers should inform the school of the reason for an absence the first morning a student is away and every subsequent day;
- Parents/carers will need to be aware of what is expected of them and challenged if they fail to inform the school of the reason for absence, or if the reason given for the absence is unacceptable;
- Parents/carers to inform school of absence by telephone or email (see individual school websites for details);
- The parent/carer should contact the school by 9.00 am. If the parent/carer does not do this the absence may have to be marked as unauthorised. From this the parent/carer of identified students should expect to be contacted by a member of the Attendance Team either by phone, text or visit;
- If any student is absent, whether or not the school has been informed of the reason for absence, they may receive a home visit or contact from the Attendance Team or school secretary in primary academies;
- If the student is absent due to a pre-arranged appointment, the parent/carer should inform the Attendance Team or school secretary in primary academies in advance of the appointment and they or the student should provide appointment slips or letters or the absence may not be authorised.

Intervention:

Individual students, whose attendance is having a negative impact on their learning, will be discussed at the regular attendance meeting. Relevant intervention will be agreed in accordance with the attendance processes within each school. This may include phone calls, letters, meetings or fines/ court summons.

Lateness:

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will include:

- Informing parents/carers when a student is regularly late;
- There will be detentions for students who are late in line with the attendance process and where absences occur after the registers close at the specified time an unauthorised late 'U' code will be used (secondary academies only).

Your child is feeling unwell – advice to parents?

Four questions to be considered by parents:

1. Will this illness prevent my child learning at school today?
2. When was the last time your child was absent from school?
3. Could there be another reason why they don't want to be in school?
4. As a parent/carer would I take a day off work for the same condition?

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence is coded when an explanation from parents is provided on the day of absence and agreed by the school as a suitable reason.

Unauthorised Absence is when at least one of the following may occur:

- The student does not attend school;
- The school are not notified by parents;
- The reason for absence is not deemed to be a reasonable explanation for absence;
- The student arrives late to school after the registers have closed.

Any absence your child has from school, whether it is authorised or unauthorised, may have a detrimental effect on their learning and their chances of achieving their full potential.

Medical appointment

Medical appointments should be, if possible, out of school hours. Where this is not possible, a student would **not** be expected to be absent for the whole day. The school must be provided with evidence of a medical appointment for **every** occasion such as appointment cards or medical letters.

Do I need to provide medical evidence if my child is absent due to illness?

Although we appreciate that students can become ill for a variety of reasons, as a school we have to take the decision whether to authorise or not the absence. Medical evidence may be requested when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- A student's absence drops beneath 93%;
- A student has 4 separate illnesses over a 2-week period;
- A student has a prolonged absence of 5 days or more in any 2-week period.

School will authorise absence where satisfactory medical evidence is provided. Medical evidence can be obtained in the following ways:

- Prescription labels of medication;
- Medical/dental appointment cards which clearly show the date and time;
- Hospital/dental appointment letters which clearly show the diagnosis and the length of time a student cannot attend school;
- A GP medical letter;
- Proof of diagnosis from a consultant;
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) assessment.

If the school requires further information about a child's medical needs it may ask the parent/carer for further information, or for permission to liaise directly with the child's GP or other medical professionals where appropriate.

Students prevented from attending school due to a long-term underlying medical condition which has been formally diagnosed by a medical professional will require ongoing regular reviews and guidance from a medical professional.

Student absence in term time and extended leave:

The school will not authorise leave of absence in term time unless an application has been made in advance and the Principal considers that there are exceptional circumstances in relation to the application.

The expectation is that term time absence should not be planned, or holidays booked as a matter of course as they are highly unlikely to be **authorised** and may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice (fine) or a prosecution.

Exceptional circumstances:

These are defined as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting;
- **Exceptional significant** family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you and may include one day for the marriage of an immediate family member (parent or sibling) plus two days for travel if marriage or funeral is taking place abroad.
- Funeral of a close family member
- Representing your country or county in a sporting activity.

The Principal will consider every above request individually, but the **following will not meet the criteria:**

- Relatives coming to visit;
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad;
- Family day trips;
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.

Penalty notices or prosecutions may be requested without warning where the parent/carers have chosen to take the child on leave during term time without authorisation, or evidence is subsequently found to suggest a child was absent from school with the knowledge of the parent/carers.

Penalty Notices and Prosecutions for Unauthorised Absence from School

Parents/carers may be issued with penalty notices or prosecuted if a student has unauthorised absence from school which include any or all of the following:

- unauthorised holiday in term time;

- other absence that the school does not authorise;
- if the student arrives late for school after the registers have closed.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for legal sanctions to the Local Authority, unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

1. Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.) Fines are payable to the Local Authority.

2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures for more information).

As explained above, penalty notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of penalty notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four penalty notices would be issued. Penalty notices cannot be paid in instalments.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust and where materially amended is consulted on, where necessary. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.