



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Reviewed: August 2024**

**Review due: Autumn 2025**

This policy will remain valid until the end of the academic year 2024-2025

### Introduction

At PGHS, we are committed to promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality. Regular and punctual attendance is an essential requirement for a successful education and, to feel a part of the school community pupils need to attend school regularly. Being absent without leave can have a serious effect on a child's academic and social progress and development on their welfare. In addition, we take our pupils' safety very seriously and need to know they are safe in accordance with the School's commitment to safeguarding their welfare.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
- to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, reduce absence and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
- to recognise the link between attendance, absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

At PGHS we will aim to:

- to maintain an efficient and robust system for recording and monitoring attendance of all our pupils;
- work with parents to promote punctuality and good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- respond promptly and appropriately to attendance problems to ensure compliance with relevant education legislation, regulations and guidance, including:
  - [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#);
  - [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#);
  - DfE Guidance (from 19<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024, this is statutory guidance):  
[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#);
  - ['Is my child too ill for school?' guidance \(NHS, April 2024\)](#);





- [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance](#) (DfE, September 2023);
- [Guidance for parents on school attendance](#) (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023);
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) (DfE, February 2023);
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) (DfE, February 2023);
- [Children Missing Education](#) (DfE, August 2024)
- Guidance published by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI); and
- Advice published by our Local Authority [Absence and attendance | Enfield Council](#)

The School recognises that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and the Deputy Head has designated responsibility for championing and improving attendance in the School. Integral to the School's ethos and culture is developing good patterns of attendance.

The School recognises:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
- the link between attendance and strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;
- the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
- that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Parents and teachers share the responsibility for promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. Every opportunity will be used for staff to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of punctuality and attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating these expectations to pupils and parents. Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

Under the legislation parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.





### **The School's Responsibilities: Registration and Absence**

The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts and groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent. The School will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

The school register is a legal document. Registers are marked daily at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session, during registration/form time sessions, or in the first lesson of the afternoon session (seniors).

The School follows up all absences to ascertain the reason for the absence, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken and identify whether the absence is approved or not; and identify the correct way to code the absence on the register.

Only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

It is not educationally desirable for pupils to be absent from School during term time for the purpose of family holidays. Parents are discouraged from doing so in the educational interests of their daughter. The official School holiday dates are published well in advance to allow sufficient choice for the booking of family holidays outside of term time. In addition, parents are asked to ensure that flight bookings are made so that their daughter does not miss the first/last day or afternoon of the School term as this also counts as an official School day. Holidays during term time are normally refused unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be considered by the Head, at their discretion. Whilst the Head will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

### **The Responsibilities of parents/carers**

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives full-time education suited to their age, aptitude and any special educational need. They must therefore make sure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.

Parents should:

- Ensure their child attends daily and on time;
- Keep the School fully informed on all matters that might affect their child's attendance;
- Telephone the school or email the school office on the first day of any absence to provide an explanation for the absence;
- Provide proof of medical appointments or illness (e.g. prescription or appointment card) or a letter confirming the reason for absence when the school requests proof of absence;





- Make doctor and dental appointments for their children outside school hours/term time wherever possible;
- Plan family holidays outside of term time;
- Make a formal application in writing with a minimum of seven working days' notice to the relevant Head via the school office for any term time absence.

Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the Terms and Conditions, and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably. There is an expectation on parents to work with the school to resolve pupil attendance issues, attending meetings with the school and work with the local authority and any outside agencies should this be deemed necessary to support/resolve high levels of absence. In certain circumstances, the School may use an Attendance Contract with the Pupil/Parent to support improving attendance.

### **The Expectations of Pupils**

Assuming they are fit and healthy, pupils are expected to be punctual and attend school every day that school is in session.

Pupils should:

- attend all lessons and all relevant activities when at school;
- be punctual and arrive at lessons on time, particularly those which come after a break or lunchtime.
- be organised with the right equipment and ready to learn.
- In the case of sickness pupils should inform their parents/carers who will in turn be expected to contact the school. (If a pupil decides to call the school themselves, the absence will not be authorised).
- Pupils are expected to follow the protocols in place for late arrival and can expect sanctions in line with the school's behaviour policy if they do not.
- Pupils may be asked to bring in proof of illness, sickness or other causes of absence.
- Pupils are encouraged to inform a trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable attending school for any other reason.

### **Additional Needs**

The School recognises that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school and we will work with those pupils and parents to try to put support in place to remove the barriers to attendance. Strategies will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional (emotionally-based schools avoidance, ESBA) or mental health challenge that is affecting their attendance. The School will work with parents and pupils to identify sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of





sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

### **Managing Poor Pupil Attendance**

Attendance statistics are checked by SLT/SMT on a regular basis to explore patterns of absence and consider possible interventions. While the circumstances of individual pupils and families will always be considered, parents and carers are advised that the following series of actions will take place:

- Stage 1 Below 90% attendance – a class teacher or form tutor will email and/or call a parent/carers to advise that the pupil's attendance is becoming a cause for concern, discuss circumstances and agree a plan to improve attendance.
- Stage 2 80-85% attendance – parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting with the Deputy Head or a member of SMT to discuss the circumstances. Actions agreed will be documented. Attendance targets will put in place, with support where required, and monitored. The School may report to and seek advice from the local authority.
- Stage 3 Below 75% attendance – there will be a formal review with the Head or Deputy Head. It may include consideration of a reduced curriculum, repeating the academic year or reviewing the pupil's place at the school, in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions. Input may include support from an Education Welfare Officer, the pupil's GP, or mental health practitioner.

Outside agencies, such as an Education Welfare Officer, a GP, a psychiatrist or psychotherapist may be contacted at any stage to support a pupil and their attendance. For cases that require intensive family support, the school may make a referral to social services, usually in the form of an Early Help Referral.

Where a pupil has been through the stages above but then improved their attendance only for it to decline again, it is at the discretion of SMT/SLT to decide which stage of the process the pupil should be placed upon, involving pupil and parents accordingly.

### **Children at Risk of Missing Education**

On occasions when lengthy pupil absence is known and understood the school will support families to ensure a continuity of education.

The School will, after making appropriate checks, report to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service if it has a serious concern over a child's attendance or the child has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. This Service has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education. For further information, please refer to the PGHS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.





### **Educational Visits and other activities**

Staff must take a face-to-face roll of the pupils travelling to an educational visit, residential, sporting fixture or any other offsite activity and record this on the Evolve system before departing the school site. The office staff will transfer this to the AM/PM register in iSAMs if the event has departed prior to a registration period. Where possible, colleagues should avoid organising on or offsite events that cut across the formal registration period however, in the event that this is unavoidable, it should be agreed with the Deputy Head in advance. The colleague organising the event should communicate a list of pupils to the school office for accurate recording on iSAMs.

### **Pupils moving to another school and/or a new address**

Where a parent or guardian notifies the school that the pupil will be moving to a new address will be recorded in the admission register: (a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live, (b) the new address, and (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, schools must record in the Admission Register: (a) the name of the other school, and (b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

### **Preservation and Amendments to the Attendance register**

Attendance reports are downloaded from iSAMs each half term and these are saved electronically. These are kept for a period of no less than six years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **School Admission Register**

The School ensures that its Admission Register is accurate and kept up to date. Parents are asked to inform the school office of any changes to their details whenever they occur.

The School notifies the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the Admissions Register at a non-standard transition point, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the Register. This duty does not apply at standard transition points – where the pupil has completed the School's final year – unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

The School notifies the local authority when a pupil's name is added to the Admissions Register at a non-standard transition point.





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### **Information Sharing**

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education. The School, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms). Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

### **Record keeping and confidentiality**

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's Retention of Records Policy. The information created in connection with this Attendance Policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has a published Data Privacy Notice on its website which explains how the school uses personal data.



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