

THE PRIORY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body on:	November 2017
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Governors Committee:	Learning and Teaching
Staff responsible:	Deputy Headteacher

ATTENDANCE

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of The Priory School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community.

Regular attendance is key to achieving, research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage parents / carers to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

LEGAL POSITION

Every student of compulsory school age, who is a registered student of a school, must attend the school regularly.

Students need to attend regularly if they are to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance leads to educational disadvantage. It places students at risk and in some cases it can result in students being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

There is a direct correlation between high absence and low attainment, as well as the impact this has on a pupil's future employment prospects.

Therefore, The Priory School believes that regular attendance at school is vital for its students to be successful.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular school attendance and failure to do so may mean committing an offence under sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act 1996.

EXPECTATIONS

ALL STUDENTS MUST:

- Attend school regularly,
- Attend school punctually,
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day,
- Discuss promptly with their Form Tutor, Head of Year or another member of the Pastoral Team any problems that may affect their ability to attend school regularly.

ALL PARENTS / CARERS WILL:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities,
- Ensure that their student arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day,
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their student away from school,
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details,

- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their student.

THE SCHOOL WILL:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere,
- Provide a safe and aspirational learning environment,
- Provide a sympathetic response to any student's or parent's concerns,
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality,
- Monitor individual student's attendance and punctuality.

GOOD ATTENDANCE

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis and the tutor group / groups with the highest attendance will receive cakes from the Deputy Headteacher..

ABSENCE

There are a few circumstances where a student may not attend school and the absence may be authorised, namely:

- a) Sickness,
- b) With the permission of the Headteacher,
- c) To take part in a day of religious observance by the persuasion to which the parents belong.

ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS/MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents are discouraged from keeping students off school for minor ailments (we do not follow the Primary School rules of 48 hours at home following sickness or stomach bugs). Parents are encouraged to limit time off for visits to doctors or dentists as far as is reasonably practicable and to make the appointments after 1.30pm in the afternoon. Where this is unavoidable, please notify the school in advance.

Parents need to ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence and every subsequent day their student is absent by calling the Student Services Office (01306 878784) or emailing the absence line (enquiries@priorscofe.com).

If a student fails to register or is absent from school and the school has not received any notification, then an automated message / text message / email will be sent to the parents/guardian informing them of their student's absence. If the school does not receive a response within 24 hours to these messages then letters will be sent out and the absence will be unauthorised.

Where a student is absent without any prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason) the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

Requests for medical evidence will be made when a student falls below the threshold of 95%.

Explanations such as birthdays, weddings, minding the house and shopping trips within school hours are not acceptable reasons for absence.

HOLIDAYS

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where a student is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each student who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. If parents fail to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare then this will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. (Unauthorised absence includes late arrival after the close of registration (9.15am) without good reason.

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

At The Priory School we scrutinize attendance data in order to identify irregular attendance patterns. If a student's attendance is irregular or a pattern is discovered, or it falls below the school's expectations then the school will inform parents/carers in writing. It may be necessary for parents/carers to attend a meeting in school to discuss attendance concerns. If students do not attend school regularly, the Education Welfare Service will be informed.

REGISTERING STUDENTS

Registration will take place at the start of each lesson and in pm tutor time. Staff with concerns about attendance will refer these to the Form Tutor and/or Head of Year and the Attendance Officer.

PUNCTUALITY

Students should also be punctual to school and individual lessons. Period one is at 8.55 am. Students arriving after this will be marked as late. Students who arrive after 9.15am will be marked as absent for the whole lesson. Sanctions may be imposed on students who are persistently late to school or lessons. Telephone calls and/or text messages may well be sent to parents of those who are late and they may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. If a student is late they will receive a detention from their teacher or a member of SLT.

ILLNESS (in school)

If a student becomes ill during the school day, they must ask for permission to go to reception during lesson time and student services at break or lunch, if necessary, parents will be contacted for the student to go home. Students must never contact parents directly to make arrangements to go home and if the correct procedures are not followed then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

TRUANCY

If a student truants from school or leaves school without permission, this is regarded as an extremely serious matter. It may take up a great deal of staff time and it may be necessary to inform the police that a student is missing. This is a matter both of discipline and personal safety. Under no circumstances should students leave school without permission from a member of staff. Heads of Year will report every act of truancy to parents/carers and any student found truanting will be liable to school sanctions such as detentions.

The Education Welfare Service conduct Truancy Patrols across the academic year.

SANCTIONS

Detentions will not exceed one hour. These may be given after school or during lunchtime or break times. Students may also be required to make up any work they have missed. Internal exclusion or isolation may also be a further consequence of truanting etc. Twenty four hours written notice will be given to parents of any detention after school.

PENALTY NOTICES

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their student's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 (per parent per student) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 (per parent per student) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN A PENALTY NOTICES MAY BE ISSUED

When a student comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the student's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent / carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent / carer.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, another Penalty Notice will be issued. Again, the Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.