**Attendance Policy**

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| **Approved/adopted by** | **Governing Body** |  |
| **Last reviewed by/on** | **SLT** | **January 2023** |
| **Next review date due by** | **Date** | |

The policy is informed by **Working together to improve School Attendance (DFE May 2022)**

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**Attendance Policy**

**Introduction**

Pinders Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximizes opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late, therefore regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

**Aims**

The school aims to promote, among parents and children, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.

**Why Regular Attendance is important**

Ensuring your child’s regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Regular attendance is important because:

* **Learning:** Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.
* Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
* Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
* Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
* Regular attenders find learning more enjoyable and satisfying.
* Regular attenders have an easier transition to secondary school.
* Any pupil’s absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
* **Safeguarding:** Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone’s responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance

- Behaviour Management

- Health and Safety

- Access to the Curriculum

- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

**Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

Give you details on attendance in our School letters;

* + Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
  + Celebrate good attendance by displaying class achievements - attendance cup, certificate and H.E.R.O
  + Communicate any concerns we have regarding your child’s attendance
  + Reward good or improving attendance through weekly class competition Class with highest attendance awarded with attendance certificate, trophy and H.E.R.O (Here. Everyday. Ready. On time.) in weekly celebration assembly.
  + Attendance display – weekly attendance winners (Gold, Silver & Bronze) add an award to the display
  + Termly certificates awarded to pupils for 100% attendance.
  + Termly badges awarded for 100% attendance.
  + Certificates awarded for 100% attendance for the whole school year.

**The Law relating to attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’

The Law relating to safeguarding Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

**Understanding Types of Attendance**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED (I,C,M,B,V,P) or UNAUTHORISED (N, O,U, G). This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required verbally, writing or in a text.

**Authorised absences** are hours away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Examples of Authorised Absence:**

* Sickness (if absences are excessive, a doctor’s note will be required).
* Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement).
* Approved sporting or musical activity/competition/examination.
* Fixed term exclusion.
* Emergency medical, dental or other appointment where evidence has been provided and the time absent from school is minimised.
* Religious observance days

Pinders Primary School realises that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes a child to be absent. Parents/carers should inform us of when this occurs and we will aim to deal with it as sympathetically as possible.

**The School acknowledges that most children will have some unavoidable absence because of illness. It is important that children are not sent to school when they are unwell. It is especially important in the event of a stomach upset that the child has at least 48 hours clear at home after the last episode of diarrhoea.**

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

* parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
* truancy before or during the school day
* absences which have never been properly explained
* children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
* shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
* day trips and holidays in term time

This list is not exhaustive. Patterns of absence will be challenged.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and can make things worse.

**Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parents’ fullest support and co-operation to tackle this and overcome any barriers.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our school system.

Where attendance does not improve, pupils and their parents may be subject to a Fast Track procedure; this is where you are invited into school to formally review your child’s attendance and discuss next steps to improve it.

Where absence continues to raise concern, these cases are made known to the EWO, who monitor whole school data regularly. Where support is not working or not being engaged with, school will liaise with the local authority and a penalty notice/fine will be issued.

**Severe Absenteeism (SA):**

A pupil becomes a ‘severe absentee’ when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is causing severe damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parents’ fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Any case that is seen to be moving towards “severely absent” will be picked up as a priority and you will be informed of this immediately (see appendix 2.) At this level, we will continue to monitor all absence thoroughly and put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. We will also work with other partners (including the local authority) to consider additional approaches to support you. This could include:

* A whole family plan
* Alternative provision
* Working with other external agencies, who can provide additional support
* Working with the local authority on legal intervention (penalty notice/fine)

**Absence Procedures:**

**If your child is absent you must:**

• Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

• Call/text school and or report to reception.

• Contact school each day to keep us informed/updated regarding the absence

• Where possible, inform school when you expect your child to return to school

**If your child is absent, we will:**

1) Telephone you on the first day of absence, if we have not heard from you;

2) If no response to call, text or email we will conduct a home visit to ascertain reason for absence

3) If there is no answer to the home visit, a calling slip will be pushed through your door to inform you of our visit

4) Review all absences and follow these up with parents in the following days

**If your child’s absence persists, we will:**

• Send a letter to inform you that your child’s attendance is a cause for concern

• Invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of our SLT if absences persist;

• Refer the matter to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer, if attendance moves below 90% (PA) and no improvement is made

• Continue to monitor absence thoroughly

• If attendance moves below 50% (severely absent), school will invite you into school to discuss matters further. School will consider what additional targeted support can be put in place to remove any barriers

• External agencies will be invited in, to offer support where appropriate/necessary

**Lateness & Punctuality**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and vital information and news for the day. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

If your child is persistently late during the week, you will receive a telephone call from school. Persistent lateness could result in prosecution and penalty notices.

**How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 8.50 a.m and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9.00 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.15 a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a U mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with school to resolve the problem, but you can approach school at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Children who remain uncollected at the end of the timetabled day will be referred to a place of safety within school. Parents will be asked a reason for their lateness and this will be recorded.

If parents/carers persistently collect their child late, they will be asked to attend a meeting where they will be informed that other agencies, e.g. Social Care will be contacted and asked to collect the child if it continues.

**Absence Review Procedures**

Attendance is reviewed on a termly basis where pupils identified as persistent absentees, in line with the set government criteria and the school’s attendance target, are subject to further monitoring and or action due to the link between attendance and attainment. We as a school have a duty to inform parents of their child’s attendance and how this can impact upon their performance.

Long term standing medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant doctor or photocopy of medical prescriptions) where appropriate.

**Leave of absence in term time:**

Taking leave in term time will affect your child’s schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not removing them from school. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child’s education. As a school we will not authorise holidays. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday

From September 2013, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 removed provision for Headteachers to grant term time leave of absence in ‘special circumstances’ and only allow leave to be granted in ‘exceptional circumstances'.

**How to make a request**

* Requests for leave for a family during term time must be made in advance, either by filling in our school Leave of Absence form or in writing to the Headteacher by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.
* A return to school day must be given, with proof of return flights were applicable, and adhered to.
* A response to your request for leave will be sent via post/delivered by hand within 10 working days.

**Teachers are not expected to set work for absent pupils where the absence is due to a holiday in term time.**

**Attendance Targets:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets and weekly attendance information for the school and for individual classes are displayed outside the hall and on the school website. You should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% and we will keep you updated about progress to this level and how your child’s attendance compares at parent’s evening. Our target is to achieve a whole school attendance target of 97% because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

**Children Missing from Education**:

A child or young person is considered to be missing from education if they are of compulsory school age and:

* Are not on a school roll
* Are not being suitably educated at home, privately or in alternative provision

School will refer to the Children Missing in Education team if a child has had more than 20 consecutive days unauthorised absence or they have not returned following agreed leave of absence, and neither the school, nor the Local Authority can locate them. This means that the school has a legal duty to carry out investigations. These will include liaising with Wakefield City Council Children Missing from Education Service, Social Care, the Police, and other agencies in order to try to locate the child and ensure that s/he is safe. When all investigations have been carried out, we are advised by the Children Missing from Education team of further actions, i.e removing a child from the school’s roll.

**Statutory School Age**

All children between the age of 5 and 16 years must be in full time education. Children are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have. Parents/carers of statutory school age children have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on the Best Practice Guidance produced by the Department for Education.

* Discuss any serious attendance concerns with the Attendance Officer, who will consider ways to improve individual attendance and punctuality, including using sanctions for statutory school age children.

**How do we use attendance data?**

Regular data analysis helps schools to identify and provide support to pupils or cohorts that need it. This can include looking at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address these.

To enable use to identify any pupils, families or classes that require support, we:

* + Monitor weekly patterns of attendance and deliver targeted support to pupils and families. These patterns can include: regular Monday and Friday absence, regular unauthorised leave of absence and irregular and frequent medical appointments.
  + Provide weekly class attendance reports to appropriate staff to facilitate discussions with pupils
  + Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends
  + Use our data analysis to devise specific strategies to address poor attendance
  + Monitor the impact of any strategies used to improve attendance
  + Provide frequent data and reports to support the work of the governing board

**People responsible for attendance in this school are:**

Mrs Kemplay – Head Teacher and Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Bedford – Deputy Headteacher, DSL and Lead for Attendance

Mrs Bowen – School Business Manager

Mrs Mawdsley – First Response Lead

Mrs Wagnor – Education Welfare Officer LA

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority

**Head Teacher:**

* To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
* To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
* To liaise with the EWO.
* To report to governors

**Deputy Head Teacher**

* For the collation and analysis of attendance data.
* To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
* To report to the Headteacher on attendance issues.
* To liaise with the EWO.

**School Secretary:**

* To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system.
* To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence.
* To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.

**Class Teacher**

* To complete registers accurately and on time.
* To have a classroom display showing information on attendance.
* To record all reasons for absence in the register.
* To highlight importance of attendance at parents meetings
* To inform Headteacher of concerns in a timely manner.

**Parents:**

* Contact with school on each day of absence.
* Arrange for routine doctor and dentist appointments to take place during school holidays.
* To book family holidays and visits to relatives outside of term time.
* Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child’s welfare and life opportunities are promoted