

# PERRYFIELDS PRIMARY PRU



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Review Date	Developed and Reviewed Date	Reviewer (Who?)	Approved By Name and Date
February 2022	15.03.2022	Chair of Education Sub Committee – S. Boyce	Management Committee 22.03.22
February 2023	January 2023	Chair of Education Sub Committee SLT	Management Committee 07.02.23
February 2024	January 2024	Chair of Education Sub Committee DSL SLT	Management Committee 06.02.23

Minutes Reference	06.02.2024
Signature of Chair	

## **Statement of intent**

Perryfields Primary PRU believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents/carers follow the framework set out in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Management Committee has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance leader is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

## **Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave

- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

#### **Persistent absenteeism:**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

#### **Severe absenteeism:**

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason; pupils who are absent from school more than they are present

### **Training of staff**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

### **Pupil expectations**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will try to keep their attendance at, or above, 96% throughout the year.

## **Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)**

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents/carers.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

## **Pupils with severe absence**

Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan and a specialist provision for the child.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. We should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, make a referral for a children's social care assessment.

## **Absence procedures**

Parents/carers will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. Alternatively, parents/carers may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

A telephone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents/carers to speak to the attendance leader. The school will inform the LA, when required of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, depending on individual circumstances, the attendance leader may be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

## **Parental involvement**

The school will build respectful relationships with parents/carers and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents/carers will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

## **Attendance register**

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided



- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved in line with the Data Protection Policy (See retention of records section).

## **Attendance leader**

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance leader who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parental agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance leader has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents/carers.

The attendance leader will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

## **Lateness**

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

The school day starts at 9:00am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by 9:20am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 9:30am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- After lunch, registers are marked by 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

- The register closes at 1:10pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- Pupils attending after 9:20am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## **Term-time leave**

The school will require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- Financial benefits of taking holidays in term time.

If parents/carers take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

## **Truancy**

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 9:00am and 1:00pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents/carers of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **Missing children**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be followed in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents/carers of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents/carers have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Relationships and Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

## **Religious observances**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents/carers will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## **Appointments**

As far as possible, parents/carers will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **Young carers**

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

## **Monitoring and review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is a challenging 96 percent, which is in line with mainstream schools.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

## **Attendance Monitoring Procedures**

Perryfields Primary PRU has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
2. Contact is made with parents/carers on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported.
3. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls to 85% the class teacher speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. They may make a phone call home to discuss this with parents/carers, if necessary or issue a standard letter.
5. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents/carers are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents/carers are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare leader (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
6. If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents/carers if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.