



Attendance Policy

Preparatory School (inc. EYFS)

v1.0

Approved (Date):	21 September 2023
Next review (Date):	September 2024
Owner (Name, Title):	Head of Prep School
Classification	Statutory
Comment:	

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The School aims to meet its obligations with regards to attendance by:

- Ensuring a culture of good attendance is central to the School's ethos and culture
- Working to reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting punctuality in attending lessons
- Working with the relevant Local Authority when there are attendance concerns

1.2. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems that may lead to non-attendance.

1.3. The School recognises that continuity is a key part of a successful education. Very often, if a pupil misses a day, they do not understand fully the content of lessons the following day, further compounding the difficulties caused by absence.

1.4. Maintaining an accurate attendance register is a key part of the School's safeguarding arrangements. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, with particular reference to the procedures for Children Missing from Education.

1.5. The School believes that in order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, regular attendance is necessary. It seeks to enable this by:

- developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance

- recording attendance during registration periods twice daily
- regularly checking reasons for absence with parents or guardians
- supporting those who are having problems with attendance
- supporting pupils in catching up work missed through absence
- publishing term dates at least 12 months in advance
- arranging peripatetic music lessons so that they have a minimal effect on timetabled lessons
- ensuring children's attendance is visible to parents through the School Portal

2.0. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

2.1. This policy meets the requirements of Working Together to Improve School Attendance (May 2022) from the Department for Education. This is drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (including subsequent amendments)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

2.2. Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school during term time, but the law allows Head teachers to consider individual requests to authorise a leave of absence **in exceptional circumstances.**

2.3. According to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Regulation 3(15) "The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and an attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006."

2.4. Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers, an Admissions register, known as the "School Roll" and an attendance register. School Inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

2.5. The Regulations covering school admission and attendance are very prescriptive, reflecting the importance that successive Governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and during the afternoon for all day pupils. The Regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained. Where any reference is made to Prep School procedures, this is inclusive of pupils in the EYFS.

3.0. THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

3.1. Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

3.2. Attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Disadvantages to not being in school are:

- Your child's education suffers
- Lessons are missed
- Continuity and progress of work is upset
- There is no opportunity for teachers to set additional work or to assist a child in catching up on their return from holiday
- The class is generally disrupted
- You are in breach of your legal obligation to send your child to school

3.3. **Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities.** Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

4.0. GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

4.1. Parents' Responsibility – All parents need to know that:

They are required by law to make sure that all pupils on the school register attend school regularly and punctually. All children have an entitlement to access the full curriculum including swimming which is part of the National Curriculum. Parents must let school know about any pupil absence on the first day of absence, stating why the child is not in school and when s/he is likely to return, in one of the following ways:

- By telephone
- By personal contact
- By letter signed by a parent (even if written by another family member)

Alongside accurate recording of attendance and absence, we have a robust day to day process to track poor punctuality.

4.2. The Head teacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence, and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact.

4.3. The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made in advance and the Head teacher may invite the parent into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

4.4. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the Head teacher, the expectation is that child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.

5.0. HOW THE SCHOOL DEALS WITH ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

5.1. It is important that pupils are at school on time (pupils are expected to be entering the school grounds from 8.00 a.m.)

5.2. If pupils arrive after the close of registration (8:30 a.m.) in order to have their presence noted in the register, they must report to the school office, where they will be signed in and a record made of the reason why they are late, and their presence then registered.

5.3. If a pupil is not in school and we have no communication from home, we will contact the parents/carers to ascertain a reason for their absence.

If any children are absent without any communication from the parent, it is our policy to:

- Ensure registers are taken at 8:30am
- Listen to absence calls and messages

- Bring together registers, lates, absence calls – produce the list of children absent with no explanation
- Double check in school before attempting to contact the parents
- Start first day calling for children absent without explanation, call everyone on the contact list until we get an answer (starting with number 1, 2, etc.). Leave messages if there is a voicemail option. Utilise our email system and push notification messaging service – but don't leave it at that, you need an explanation
- If we get an overseas ring tone – is the family taking a holiday they haven't told us about?
- Call the contact list at least twice
- By this stage, if we have a good contact list (3 numbers minimum) we will probably have a reply
- Do we have any in school intelligence, does anyone know the family?
- Make a prompt home visit (with colleague), after consultation with the DSL Team.
- If we cannot get an answer refer immediately to children's services / MASH / Police and request an immediate welfare call.
- (If we can see them inside a house avoiding your knock, don't refer – unless we think the children are at risk of significant harm).
- Make a home visit or contact the Attendance and Placement Service to follow up the absence
- Parents of children whose attendance has fallen to or below 95% will receive a letter at the end of each term. (See Appendix A)

5.4. After the above procedures, where we have concerns about a pupil's level of absence for which we have no legitimate explanation we will contact the Attendance and Placement Service who will contact the family to try to resolve any difficulties. At any point we may record all absences or times when a child is late, as unauthorised absences unless covered by a medical certificate.

If any parents are concerned about any school issues, including attendance, they are welcome to make an appointment to come into School and discuss these.

6.0. REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE

6.1. Any request for planned appointments or events that will result in missing less than a full day of school should be made by the parent/carer in writing via email to the Prep School Office.

6.2. It is the School's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A note from a parent will not count as an authorised absence if it is thought that the reasons given are not acceptable to the school, or that the reasons do not align with other information available to the school.

6.3. The Government has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. The main areas where the School will authorise absence are given below:

Examples of Authorised Absences

Appointments. Dental and medical appointments are authorized, but where possible, such appointments should be made out of school hours.

An agreed period for family bereavement.

Religious observance days

Off-site unavoidable activities e.g. music exam, if agreed by the School

Special occasions agreed with the School

Examples of Unauthorised Absences

Holidays

Shopping during school hours, including buying uniform

Absence for more than the agreed period

Attendance at any function without prior agreement of the school

Term time leave except in exceptional circumstances

Birthdays

Festivals

Going to the airport to meet or say goodbye to others

This list gives an indication of what might be authorised or unauthorised, although this is **not exhaustive**. Attendance figures will be printed on school reports and are also carried with them to the next class teacher or their next school.

6.4. Holidays. The Regulations state that time off for family holidays is not a right. Parents do not have the right to take a child out of school during term time. By law, parents must ask prior permission for their child to miss school. The Regulations do not allow the School to give retrospective approval. No parent can demand leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday as a right and the school reserve the right to withhold permission if it feels that the educational drawbacks of the request outweigh the advantages.

7.0. ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND RECORD-KEEPING

7.1. The Department for Education (DfE) expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of approximately 90% and above. Pupils whose attendance is below 90% are classed as 'persistently absent'. The School is obliged to contact parents/carers if their child's attendance drops below that figure. If attendance does not improve and absence continues to be persistent, the School may contact the appropriate Attendance, Inclusion and Participation Service from the pupil's local authority.

7.1 Form Tutors are responsible for monitoring pupil attendance and will contact parents if they feel there is a matter for concern, such as frequent absence.

7.3. Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. The School will alert the local authority after a pupil of compulsory age has:

- Been absent without authority for 10 consecutive days, or
- Failed to attend school regularly, or
- Been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing, or
- If there is a safeguarding concern (including Children Missing in Education) about the pupil in question.

Attendance Level	Action
95%+	Expected level of attendance no action required.
93-95%	Form Tutors to monitor and discuss with parents either in person or phone call. Any requests for absence will be granted but warning given that attendance levels have fallen below our expected level.
90-93%	Deputy Head Pastoral to monitor and send out an 'Amber letter'. Any requests for absence will be granted but warning given that attendance levels have fallen below our expected level.
85-90%	DHP to discuss with parents and send out a 'Red letter'. Any requests for absences are likely to be declined.
Below 85%	Parents will be called in for a meeting with DHP and an action plan made up to help raise the attendance level. Any requests for absences are likely to be declined.