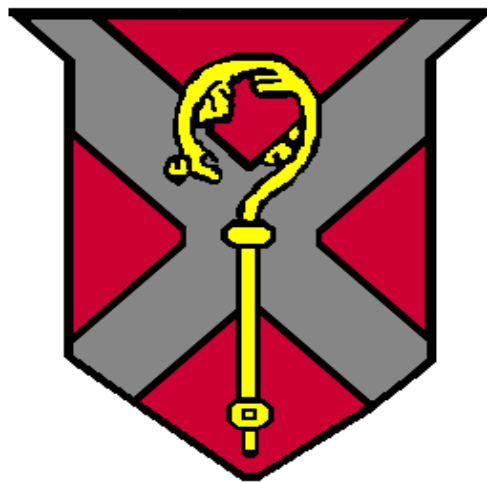


Worksoop Priory C of E Primary Academy



Attendance Policy

September 2024

Summary of changes

Date:	Summary of changes
1/9/24	✓ New policy updated to reflect DfE 'working together to improve attendance' document.

Aims and expectations

1.1

Worksop Priory C of E Academy is a Christian community that places emphasis on creating a culture of respect, trust and support. We care about and invest in our communities and each other. The Academy believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the Academy will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

At Worksop Priory C of E Primary Academy, we have a School Attendance and Punctuality policy so that we can:

- Provide a structure for responding to absences
- Ensure consistency of practice
- Offer guidelines to new members of staff, students and stakeholders
- Enable people to discuss, review and share good ideas and practices
- Work within a framework of good practice that both supports and motivates pupils, and is consistent across the school

1.2 It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupils should be deprived of his/her opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

1.3 Pupil Expectations

- That they attend school regularly, at least **97%** of the time.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

1.4 Parental Expectations

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To make all none emergency medical appointments outside of school hours.
- To provide medical evidence of appointments given by medical agencies, for example, hospital/orthodontic appointments, so that we can authorise the absence.
- To ensure that they contact the academy promptly for each day of absence unless discussed with the appropriate member of staff for extended periods of absence. This can be done via letter, phone call, text message or email.
- Provide accurate and up to date contact details to the school.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the academy in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affects the pupils' performance in school.
- To provide medical evidence if requested or if an illness exceeds 3 consecutive days.

1.5 What can parents/carers and pupils expect from school?

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance with appropriate coding.
- Early contact with parents/carer when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the pupil or their parent, unless there are concerns for the child in terms of their safety).
- We will reward good attendance but not discriminate against children with significant medical needs (where medical evidence has been provided).
- A high quality education.
- Systems and support to address attendance concerns.
- A supportive approach to improve attendance for pupils.
- Staff are appropriately trained in using our recording systems for attendance.
- Class teachers who are able to support on attendance on a day to day basis.
- A named attendance champion – Corrie Ward (Officer Manager) and Kevin Houghton (Headteacher)
- Utilise data analysis tools to identify trends in attendance, including identifying cohorts with historically low attendance.
- Compare attendance data against local, regional and national averages to identify areas for improvement.

Encouraging Attendance

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session.
- A high quality and engaging curriculum.
- Communication with parents / carers by telephone and/or letter
- Pupil discussions
- Attendance support meetings
- Recording of good attendance on individual pupil reports.
- Class attendance celebrations in a weekly worship
- Celebration wall for attendance in school
- Individual and group rewards for good attendance
- Establishing a mechanism for supporting those parents/carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- The efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable, year group, form and pupil level attendance data which can assist speedy analysis and timely responses by the academy.
- A relentless attitude to raising expectations from pupils and parents where attendance and achievement are concerned.

*Any attendance rewards will take into consideration pupils with significant medical needs that impacts attendance to avoid discrimination

Absence Procedures

3.1 When a pupil does not attend, the academy will respond in a number of ways depending on the individual circumstances.

- 1) Parents/Carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible on a day of absence via text, email or phone call to notify them of their child's absence.
- 2) A text will be sent to any parents/carers, who have not notified school of their child's absence, to notify them of their child not registering.
- 3) If a satisfactory reason is not provided, this will be followed up with a telephone call to the 1st contact, followed by 2nd contact and any further emergency contacts.
- 4) This will be followed up with a home visit to check on the welfare and safety of the child if there has been no contact.
- 5) If there has been no communication and a home visit is unsuccessful, referrals to other agencies such as social services and/or the police will be made.

Safeguarding

Where any member of staff feels that absence from school of any child may, in any way, be a safeguarding issue, they report their concerns immediately to the Senior Designated Person.

3.2 If a child absence exceeds 3 consecutive days, medical evidence will be requested in order to authorise that period of absence and will be situation specific.

The following are acceptable forms of medical evidence to allow staff to confidently authorise absence:

- ✓ Medical appointment card/letter with date and child's name
- ✓ Prescribed medication with date corresponding to absence
- ✓ Presentation of child to the school office if you are unsure if they are well enough to attend

3.3 The academy has a structured response for dealing with attendance concerns. When attendance falls below the academy's expectation of **97%**, monitoring will be put in place. This will be followed by a letter to parents/carers and medical evidence will be requested in order to authorise absences at the Academy Attendance Officer and Principal's discretion.

The Role of the Class Teacher

- 4.1** The class teachers in our school have high expectations of the children's attendance
- 4.2** Take a proactive role in pupil attendance and absence on a day to day basis.
- 4.3** Discuss the importance of good attendance with their class and take an active interest in attendance competitions and rewards.
- 4.4** Discuss with pupils in cases of poor attendance, truancy or patterns that cause concern and to communicate this with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Officer as appropriate.
- 4.5** Keep class attendance monitoring accurate through the use of electronic registers, enquiring in cases of absence.
- 4.6** Develop positive relations with parents/carers and make contact with home for both praise and concern.

The Role of the Headteacher

- 5.1** The Headteacher supports the staff in the implementation of the policy.
- 5.2** To oversee the reporting of progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents/carers.
- 5.3** To liaise with all stakeholders in the monitoring and tracking of attendance.
- 5.4** Ensure positive attendance remains a priority within the school.

The Role of the Attendance Officer and School Office

- 6.1** Liaise with staff regarding weekly attendance data and other reports on request.
- 6.2** Liaise with class teachers regarding messages received and individual parental contacts.

6.3 Monitoring attendance including letters to parents requesting penalty notices from the local authority where required.

6.4 Support with attendance panels and initiatives to raise attendance.

The Role of Governors

7.1 Ensure the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures.

7.2 Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

7.3 Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

7.4 Hold leaders to account for the effective implementation of the attendance policy

8. Lateness

8.1 As a school, we actively promote good punctuality. Pupils who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation are challenged. Parents/Carers will be contacted in cases of persistent lateness.

8.2 Registers remain open 30 minutes from the beginning of registration, for reporting purposes. Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open between 8.50am and 9:00am he/she may be marked present.

8.3 Where a pupil arrives between 9:00am and 9.20am, he/she will be marked with the letter L. (Late before registers close)

8.4 Where a pupil arrives after register closure at 9.20am without good reason, he/she will be marked with the letter U or M if the late relates to a medical appointment.

8.5 In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child is persistently late for 10 separate instances over a six week period and where they are marked as a 'U' in the attendance register.

9 Removal from the school roll

9.1 There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school, and the parent(s)/carer(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at the school. (Elective Home Education).
- Where the school has been notified by a Health Care Professional that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.

- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Principal of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the Principal has been notified that the student has died.
- The pupil has had 20 days continuous unauthorised absence, and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student.
- Where a pupil has failed to return from an extended family holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

10 Categorising Absence

10.1 Only the school, in the context of the law can authorise absence, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If there is not an acceptable explanation offered for absence, then the matter must be referred to the Headteacher. The school therefore has the right to not authorise absence if they see fit.

- Reasons for absence will be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.

10.2 Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised** which can lead to fixed penalty notice, see below.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available
- Days of religious observance
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated
- Absence that the academy deem exceptional circumstance

10.3 Unauthorised Absence

In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child has in excess of **5 days (10 sessions) unauthorised absence over a 10 week period.**

The national framework for considering penalty notices from August 2024 is:

A fine of £80 per parent/carer, per pupil if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days.

A national limit of 2 penalty notices within a 3 year rolling period. If a parent/carer receives a second fine for the same pupil within the 3 year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160 per parent. A further penalty notice would be referred to the enforcement team for possible court action.

10.4 Family Holidays

The academy cannot authorise holidays unless under exceptional circumstances due to the adverse effect upon the child's education. Unauthorised absences may be referred to the local authority, which may result in a Fixed Penalty Fine of up to £160 per parent/carer per child being enforced (under section 444(B) of the Education Act 1996), for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.

The amount of a fixed penalty notice is set by the Department for Education National Framework and are therefore subject to change without amendment of the policy.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to notify school of any intended holiday absences and any exceptional circumstances a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the holiday being taken.

Where school suspects a child may be on holiday and parents have not notified school, a home visit may be conducted.

The school will only consider authorising holidays in term time under the following exceptional circumstances:

- ✓ A parent/carer is a member of the armed forces or a police officer with directed leave
- ✓ A terminal illness to a close family member
- ✓ Religions observance (up to 3 days per year at the discretion of the school)
- ✓ Other circumstances deemed to be totally out of the control of the parents

10.5 Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstances.

- ✓ Shopping trips
- ✓ Holidays in term time unless under exceptional circumstances
- ✓ Minding the house or looking after siblings
- ✓ Lateness if registration is missed without explanation
- ✓ Medical appointments that cannot be verified
- ✓ No reason given
- ✓ Academy staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid

10.6 Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a pupil being absent from school. It is for the Headteacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

11 Monitoring

11.1 The Headteacher monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis. He also reports to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, makes recommendations for further improvements.

12.2 It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor attendance, and to ensure that the school policy is administered fairly and consistently.

12 Review

12.1 The governing body reviews this policy every two years. They governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.



Appendix 1

WORKSOP PRIORY PRIMARY ACADEMY

Monitoring of Attendance – Process and procedure

The school has a commitment to regularly monitor attendance levels and applies the following procedures to enable poor attendance to be identified and challenged:

Identification

The Attendance Officer produces an attendance report each half term highlighting pupils whose attendance fall into any of the following categories:

- Between 90 - 95%
- Between 85 - 90%
- Below 85%

Between 90-95%

Parents/Carers whose children fall into this category receive a letter explaining that their attendance needs to improve. Parents are invited to speak to the school if there is anything that they would like help with to make improvements.

Between 85-90%

Parents/Carers whose children fall into this category receive a letter inviting them to attend a meeting in school*. The meeting will be arranged for a date more than 5 school days in advance with the Headteacher and Attendance Officer. Targets and an action plan are set to improve attendance, and a further review meeting is booked for the following half term.

**Where attendance is low due to an extended period of authorized absence, the Headteacher determines whether a pupil's subsequent attendance has been sufficiently good enough to suggest that it will not be an issue in the near future. In this instance, the parent may not be invited to attend the Attendance Panel meeting, unless they themselves request to do so.*

Below 85%

The same principle applies as in the 85-90% category, with the addition that where attendance levels do not improve between meetings (to a minimum of 1 term), a referral to the NCC Enforcement Team may be made. Where improvements have been made, but not enough to move into the next category, parents are made aware that, despite this, it is still a serious attendance issue.

All Attendance Panel Meetings will take place with or without the parent/carer being present. In the absence of a parent/carer, those present will determine the required actions to improve attendance. The minutes of the meeting will be shared with the absent parent/carer. In the event of attendance not improving, the school will send this documentation to the Local Authority as part of their referral.

Celebrating successes

Where attendance *improves* to above 85%, a similar letter in the following half-term to that in the 85-90% is sent, but with reference to the recent improvement.

Where a child's attendance rises from one threshold to another, the family is rewarded with a certificate of commendation.

Exceptions

From time to time, the Attendance Panel may use their discretion to lengthen the timescales for improvement in attendance rates where special or extenuating circumstances occur. This may include, but not be limited to, periods of extended illness, hospitalisation, and other issues beyond the reasonable control of the parent/carer.

Appendix 2

There are occasions where your child may need to be away from school and we understand this. To help you keep an eye on the overall impact of your child's absence from school, we set out below what represents good, or less satisfactory attendance:

**Above
97%**

This represents good attendance. Keep it up!

Children who attend over 97% of the school year miss fewer than 6 days of learning.

94 - 96%

Your child needs to improve their attendance. Being away from school means they miss out on learning.

Children who attend 95% of the school year miss 10 days per year of learning.

90-93%

Too low! - In danger of becoming a serious attendance problem affecting your child's education.

Children who attend 90% of the school year miss 19 days per year of learning.

**Below
90%**

Attendance under 90% is classed as a serious problem. Outside agencies may become involved.

Children who attend only 80% of the school year miss 39 days of learning a year. Over the course of 5 years, that's an astonishing 1 whole year of absence!

Appendix 3 – Attendance concern letter 1 example

Address

Date

Dear

As a school, we have high expectations of our children and define good attendance to be at least 97% over the course of an entire school year. This equates to being ill for 5 school days (10 morning and afternoon sessions) over the course of a school year. Worksop Priory C of E Academy is committed to improving achievement through attendance and monitors the attendance of all of its pupils.

I am aware that absences due to illness rise at different times of the year and this can impact on a child's attendance. I am also mindful of individual circumstances and significant illnesses, where medical evidence has been provided to school, which can result in longer periods of absence. However, I am obliged to make you aware that your child's attendance is currently tracking as potentially below 90% and is therefore identified by the Department for Education as a potential persistent absentee. Up to the age of 16, a yearly 90% attendance would mean a child losing over a year of school education and failing to achieve their full educational potential.

I enclose a copy of your child's school attendance record for your information.

If there is any further support or guidance that school can provide to you or your child to support regular attendance, please do not hesitate to ask your class teacher or arrange a meeting with me.

Yours Faithfully,

Mr K Houghton

Headteacher

Appendix 4 - Attendance concerns letter 2 example

Address

Date

Attendance concerns

Dear

As a school, we have high expectations of our children and define good attendance to be at least 97% over the course of an entire school year. This equates to being ill for 5 school days (10 morning and afternoon sessions) over the course of a school year. Worksop Priory C of E Academy is committed to improving achievement through attendance and monitors the attendance of all of its pupils.

I am aware that absences due to illness rise at different times of the year and this can impact on a child's attendance. I am also mindful of individual circumstances and significant illnesses, where medical evidence has been provided to school, which can result in longer periods of absence. However, I am obliged to make you aware that your child's attendance is currently a cause for concern tracking as below 90% and is therefore identified by the Department for Education as a persistent absentee. Up to the age of 16, a yearly 90% attendance would mean a child losing over a year of school education and failing to achieve their full educational potential.

We are now in a position where we are unable to authorise any further illness absences without medical evidence (copy of a prescription or medical appointment card etc.) being provided. I must make you aware that if a child has in excess of 3 days unauthorised absence in a six week period, this may result in an attendance enforcement referral being made.

I enclose a copy of your child's school attendance record for your information.

If there is any further support or guidance that school can provide to you or your child to support regular attendance, please do not hesitate to ask your class teacher or arrange a meeting with me.

Yours Faithfully,

Mr K Houghton
Headteacher

Appendix 5 - Attendance concern letter 3 example

Address

Date

Dear

Education Enforcement Referral:

Following our previous discussions regarding attendance, we are now in a position where we are required to refer XXX attendance to Education Enforcement. XXX attendance at school for this academic year is currently at XXX%.

Should you require any further support in ensuring XXX is attending school on a regular basis, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind Regards

Mr K Houghton
Headteacher