Attendance and Punctuality Policy

(Including children with health needs who cannot attend school)

Approved by Governing Body:	
Reviewed by SSEI on:	15 November 2023
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Dissemination of the Policy: All staff and Governors, School Website	

History of policy changes

Date	Version	Change	Origin of change e.g., change in legislation, request by TU	Changed by
20.02.24		Children in care		SLT

Contents

1. Introduction and Aims

Pittville school is a school with high attendance expectations and your child has a part to play in this. We foster a culture and have an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to succeed. For our children to gain the greatest benefits from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The minimum expected level of attendance for this school is 95% and above, we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Pittville School's target is to achieve better than this. Because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and academic progress, we believe our students can be amongst the best in the country.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends every day, and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the <u>working together to improve school attendance</u> from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on <u>school attendance parental responsibility measures</u>. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of <u>The Education Act 1996</u>
- Part 3 of <u>The Education Act 2002</u>
- Part 7 of <u>The Education and Inspections Act 2006</u>
- <u>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)</u>
- <u>The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013</u>
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Ensure effective Team around the House meetings are run about attendance.

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are Mr M Watkins and Mrs. C Bury-Brunsdon

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:
- Monitoring and analysing attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with pastoral staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the designated senior lead for attendance (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed penalty notices

The attendance officer is Miss R Fitzpatrick.

3.5 Attendance Year Leads

Our five attendance year leads are responsible for raising the profile of attendance through bi-weekly rewards within their year groups. The attendance year leads also work on a term-by-term basis with 10 students in each year on improving their attendance.

We also have one EAL attendance lead who does the same with a cohort of EAL students.

3.6 Curriculum Staff

Curriculum staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis via Sims/Edulink, using the correct codes, and submitting this information at the start of each session. Whereby curriculum leaders notice poor academic progress relating to attendance, it is their responsibility to make parental contact and work with students to improve attendance to their lessons.

3.7 Attendance Staff

School attendance staff will:
- Take calls from about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Ensure that Heads of House and Year Leads are updated should they need to be on certain students of concern.

3.8 Tutors
- Ensure that each week on attendance morning all tutees are made aware of their current attendance and update their tutor pyramids.
- Put students between 88-92% on tutor report for a week until their attendance improves.
- Tutors promote good attendance regularly by making it a key focus regularly in tutor time and in discussions with their tutees.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence in the morning on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

4. Why Regular Attendance is so Important

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

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.

Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996 states:

"If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his (her) parent is guilty of an offence".

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 Pittville School on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

5. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Monitor the attendance of every student closely.

- Discuss attendance with each student every term.

- Provide staff with regular updates about attendance. This will include a weekly attendance summary for form tutors and a fortnightly attendance report for key staff.
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school and what their attendance and punctuality rate is. The report will be provided as a part of the interim and full school reports.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying whole school and form achievements.

- Reward good or improving attendance through competitions, certificates and outings/events.

- Run promotional events when parents, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register
We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:
- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
We will also record:
- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:35 am on each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken from 8:35 am and will be kept open until 9 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:20 pm and will be kept open until 2pm.

5.2 Unplanned absence
The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school absence line on 01242 548717 or via the Attendance Officers number 07715 083948.

If your child is absent, you must:
- contact the attendance line before 8:30 a.m. on the first day of absence; and contact on each subsequent day.
- send a note in on the first day he/she return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

If your child is absent, we will:
- check our attendance line and log the reason for absence.
- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- visit your home if we are unable to establish contact; this is to safeguard the student if no contact is made after 2 days.

- request support from the police if we are unable to establish contact beyond this day.

Please see the Children Missing Education Flowchart for more information if absence and no contact move past 10 days.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they miss spending valuable time with their Form Tutor and will fail to get vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Students deliberately missing form time or assembly time will be sanctioned.

A pupil who arrives late:
- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8:35 a.m. students need to be on site by 8:30 a.m. and we expect your child to be in their tutor room by 8.35. Arriving after this time, will result in a same day lunchtime detention and parents/carers will be notified.
- Registers are marked by 8:35 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- If your child arrives after the registers have closed then they will receive a 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. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Head of House to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

5.5 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via school reports and Edulink.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

At Pittville School, we strongly discourage parents/carers from requesting a leave of absence for their child in term time. Leave of absence requests will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances and generally any absence will not be authorised unless the school believes that the child is too ill to attend school. 'Exceptional circumstances', means that the parent must apply in writing, prior to the absence taking place to the Headteacher.

It is the Headteacher's decision as to what might constitute an 'exceptional circumstance' and each request for term-time absence will be considered on an individual basis with the circumstances of each case considered before a decision is reached. In an exceptional case, where the Headteacher has agreed a request for absence, it will be authorised. If the Headteacher has not agreed the request and the student is then absent, it will be unauthorised.

If leave is granted it may not exceed 10 days in any school year. If the absence is authorised but the student remains absent for longer than agreed, then the extra time will be recorded as unauthorised.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

6.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance
The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor individual attendance patterns on a weekly basis

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance
The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance
The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence
Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Students who are at risk of becoming PA or is categorised as PA:

Any student with attendance difficulties will be closely monitored by our pastoral team. We acknowledge that every student must be considered individually to properly understand the context of any absence. Our pastoral team will plan, carry out and record a series of actions that are considered to be appropriate to the context of the situation. These actions may include:
- a phone call to discuss and plan a way forward

- a student being monitored by pastoral staff/tutor
- a letter which requests medical evidence to be submitted every time a student is absent from school
- a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team to discuss and plan a way forward
- a home visit from our Pastoral Team
- a MyPlan to help the student reintegrate into school over a defined period of time
- a police safe and well check
- an information letter which details the attendance data for an individual
- an information letter which confirms when a student has moved into the PA category
- a warning letter to the parents which details the risk of legal proceedings from the Local Authority's Education Welfare Investigation Service
- an official warning letter which activates legal proceedings, this may include a sanction such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court
- an official final warning letter which confirms legal proceedings

8. Monitoring arrangements
This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Mr Watkins and Mrs Bury-Brunsdon. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

9. Links with other policies
This policy links to the following policies:
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. Children with health conditions who cannot attend school

Gloucestershire's Local Authority meets its statutory duty to provide education for any child who is unable to attend school for health reasons using a range of commissioned services. Pittville School can refer to the local authority and will do so if there is medical evidence that support why a student is absent from school for more than 15 days.

Students are expected to be in school all of the time. Where there are health or social circumstances that prevent a student from attending school a range of casework will be undertaken to support a reintegration into school.

In these circumstances the school will produce a MYPLAN which will specify the times that the student is expected to be in school and the activities that they are expected to engage with.

If a MYPLAN is required then the school will meet with the parent and the student, consider the medical evidence and agree a plan to support the student. A MYPLAN is not a long-term solution to absence, it will be reviewed regularly and will have a clear end date. If a MYPLAN is in place, then any agreed absence will be coded as authorised. Any absence that is not agreed will be coded as unauthorised. This includes MYPLAN where there is medical evidence because the MYPLAN is the

school's response to the evidence provided. Any failure to engage with the MYPLAN will require additional valid medical evidence.

Where there is no clear medical evidence that a MYPLAN should continue past the agreed end date then the school will code all absence as unauthorised and may refer to the Education Investigation Service (EIS).

Student who cannot attend school for health reasons may require a range of support mechanisms. The school will plan to use on-site provision and signpost the parent to external agencies to support the student. Often situations arise where the medical evidence for absence is not accepted by the local authority's provision. This can be difficult for parents and staff to coordinate owing to the complexity of these situations and the expectation that the child attends school. In these cases, Pittville School staff will use this flow chat to ensure that students and parents are given the best possible advice and support.

Children in care

The school recognises that children in care form a vulnerable group of learners. Regular attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. For the most vulnerable students, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues. For these reasons, when monitoring and following up attendance issues the school will prioritise children from vulnerable groups including children in care. If a child in care is not attending or there are concerns about their attendance, the school will immediately seek advice from the Local Authority's Virtual School and the child's social worker, as well as communicating with the child and parent/carer.

12. Children Missing Education

The attendance procedures described above are intended to promote good attendance, but also to allow Pittville School to identify students who are not receiving an education and to prevent students from going missing from the school system.

To underpin this practice, it is expected that:

- The local authority will fulfil its compulsory duty to identify children not receiving an education.
- Pittville School will monitor attendance daily using our processes described above.
- Parents / carers will inform the school immediately if there is a change in contact information.
- Pittville School will keep the attendance register accurate and up to date.
- Pittville School will inform Gloucestershire Local Authority immediately using the Children Services Portal if a student is removed from our roll. This includes sharing all relevant information.
- Pittville School will inform Gloucestershire Local Authority immediately if a child has been absent from school for 10 consecutive days without authorisation. This will be done using the Children Services Portal

Children at risk of going missing from education:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect.
- Come from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families.
- Come from the families of service personnel.
- Go missing or run away from home or care.
- Are supervised by the youth justice system.
- Cease to attend a school.
- Come from new migrant families.

Children who have failed to take up a school place or who have been unexpectedly absent from school for 5 or more consecutive school days are potential Children Missing from Education. In order to safeguard these children and ensure that they are able to access education, schools and other educational establishments must investigate the whereabouts of these children.

Please see the flowchart for Children Missing Education on the next page.

At any point during this process the DSL may refer to the FFD if there is reason to be concerned for the child's safety. The DSL may make the decision to refer sooner if the child is in a vulnerable group.

We will comply with our statutory duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who falls within the reporting notification requirements outlined in Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE September 2016).

Where child sexual exploitation or the risk of harm is suspected, frontline practitioners should record a Cause for Concern on the Safeguard system which immediately notifies the Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL). This must be followed up by the reporting member of staff to ensure that the cause for concern is actioned by the DSL.

Appendix 1: attendance codes
The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if

		no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day