



Attendance Policy			
Approval	Board of Governors	Chairman	Geoff Tabor
Headteacher	Sarah Richardson	Ratification	July 2024
Date of last review	July 2022	Date of this review	July 2024
Date of next review	July 2026	Maintenance	FGB
NB: This updated policy is written in conjunction with BCP(local authority) guidance and DfE statutory document 'Working together to improve school attendance'.			

1. Philosophy, aims and expectations

1.1 Philosophy

The Priory School has developed a compelling, sequenced and relevant curriculum which progresses from EYFS to Year 6. It is underpinned by our core ethos 'Made to Flourish'. Our inclusive curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all learners through engaging, first hand experiences delivered by teachers who know their content and teach with passion and precision. We recognise the fundamental role **regular, punctual** attendance plays in enabling children to reach their full academic potential.

Punctuality: Children who are regularly late miss certain essential parts of the school day such as: settling down to get ready to learn, early morning learning tasks, core skills sessions in phonics and arithmetic, as well as an explanation of the day ahead.

Attendance: When a child attends school on a regular basis, they take an important step towards reaching their full potential, and are given the greatest opportunity to learn new things and develop their skills. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their learning and do less well academically, impacting on exam results and future career pathways. The more time a child spends around other children, whether in the classroom or as part of a school team or club, the more chance they have of making friends and feeling included, boosting social skills, confidence and self esteem.

It is essential that Priory pupils form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that excellent attendance is maintained throughout their school career. This is particularly important following the disruption to education during and following the Covid pandemic.

1.2 Aims and expectations

- We want all the children to benefit from regular and punctual attendance, so that they have full access to the curriculum we provide; issues are identified and acted upon as quickly as possible.
- We want parents and carers to have a clear understanding of their own responsibilities
- We want staff to recognise the valuable role they play in supporting and promoting excellent attendance
- We aim to accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence
- Will regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance
- We will build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- We will share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

In order to achieve our aims, we recognise that everyone within the Priory community will need to work together.

We expect children to:

- arrive at school on time with the right equipment for the day
- attend school every day
- feel confident to talk to staff about issues affecting their regular and punctual attendance

We expect parents/carers to:

- fulfil their legal requirements in ensuring their children attend school every day and arrive in school between 8:35am and 8.45am, equipped and ready to start their learning
- notify the school in line with the school's attendance protocol (email office@prioryceprimary.co.uk or tel. 01202 484105) if a child is prevented from attending for any reason or is late. A pupil's absence will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is given
- work with the school to support excellent attendance and commit to engaging positively with the school and the local authority should attendance become a concern

In turn, families can expect that staff will:

- record their children's attendance in a timely, accurate and efficient way
- make every reasonable effort to contact the child's parent or carer when their child fails to attend school without good reason
- deal discreetly and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent or carer
- make all efforts to encourage regular attendance and excellent punctuality
- ensure that all families, pupils, staff and governors are familiar with our policy and procedures

*In addition, the Head and (**nominated Attendance Champion - Miss Field**) will take responsibility for:*

- Overall monitoring of individual and whole school absenteeism
- Tracking pupils who meet the national threshold of 10 in 10
- Contacting parents to share concerns regarding high level or inappropriate absences or persistent lateness
- Meeting with families to discuss barriers to attendance and identify support that can be put in place
- Authorising leave of absence on behalf of the governing body
- Making referrals to the Local Authority's School Inclusion Service
- Liaising with external agencies such as social care as appropriate
- Reporting to parents, the governing body and the Local Authority as appropriate
- Making decisions concerning school closure in line with Local Authority guidance
- Informing the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, following the Local Authority's procedures for a Child Missing Education
- Developing strategies and incentives to promote good attendance.

Governors will:

- Appoint a governor to specifically monitor the leadership and management of Attendance
- Ensure school leaders fulfil duties and statutory duties
- Monitor overall attendance figures
- Work with the Head, AHT, Attendance Champion and staff to improve attendance

The Local Authority School Inclusion Service will:

- support the school in expecting parents and carers to make sure that pupils attend school on a regular basis
- hold termly/annual in-person or virtual Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs) to monitor the attendance of persistently and severely absent pupils
- hold termly 'Attendance Forums' via Teams for school attendance staff. The focus of these sessions is providing local/national updates and an opportunity to share good practice from the local area.
- provide fortnightly drop-in Q&A sessions via Teams with the Senior Inclusion Officer for school attendance staff to access as needed.
- support the school in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school. Therefore a pattern of unauthorised absence, which can include taking holidays in term time, can result in a Penalty Notice or further legal action.

2. Promoting attendance

We encourage excellent attendance by :

- greeting children and families with a warm welcome at the start of each school day
- accurately completing registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon
- delivering high quality learning opportunities to all pupils, motivating them to attend school
- having a clear vision 'Made to Flourish' which instils high levels of motivation and resilience in our pupils
- promoting mental health and wellbeing through our school vision, #HeartPriory, Trick Box
- following up absence in a prompt and timely manner on the first day of absence

- tracking attendance carefully to identify any attendance patterns or trends
- informing parents and carers if the child's attendance is a cause for concern
- alerting parents and carers at the beginning of the school year of the importance of building a good record in attendance, which will feature on the child's end of year report
- giving parents and carers an indication of the accumulating record if there is a cause for concern.
- sharing and discussing attendance data at parent consultations
- teaching children to value good attendance, and praising them when there is an improvement in attendance
- promoting school attendance and punctuality regularly in the school newsletter
- building strong partnerships with parents based on respect, dignity and helps to develop productive links between home and school
- appointing an Attendance Champion to support and work alongside families and children to ensure good attendance

3. Priory attendance protocols

Registration

Children should arrive between 8.35 and 8.45 so they are settled and ready for the register at 8.45 am (at which time the school gate also closes). Please note that any child arriving after 8.45am will be classed as a **late arrival**. Any child arriving in school after 9.00am will be classed as an **unauthorised absence**.

Absence

To ensure the continued safety and welfare of the children, it is essential that the school is notified of the nature of your child's absence e.g. illness, medical treatment, either by a telephone call or an email to the school office. **This should be done on the first day of absence between 8.30am and 8:45am.**

Once registers have been completed, office staff are required to contact the parent/carer of absent children who have not either telephoned or previously messaged the school explaining the absence, to establish that they are safe. If we can not make contact with families, we may need to contact social care or the police.

Although it is very important that children do not miss any schooling unless absolutely necessary, they must *not* attend if they are unwell. We have set out our minimum exclusion period for common illnesses and medical conditions.

Common childhood illnesses/ disease	Minimal Exclusion Period
Athlete's Foot	None. Children should not be barefoot
Chickenpox	At least 5 days from onset of rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Cold sores (herpes simplex)	None. Avoid contact with the sores
Conjunctivitis	None
Respiratory infections including coronavirus (Covid-19)	Children should not attend if they have a high temperature and are unwell. Children who have a positive test result for COVID-19 should not attend school for 3 days after the day of the test.
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Pupils can return 48 hours after symptoms have stopped
Diphtheria	Exclusion is essential and Public Health notified

Glandular fever	None
Hand foot and mouth	None
Head lice	None
Impetigo	Until the skin has healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
Measles	4 days from onset of rash
Mumps	5 days after onset of swelling
Ringworm	Not usually required
Rubella (German measles)	5 days from onset of rash
Scabies	Need not be excluded once appropriate treatment has been given
Slapped cheek	None
Threadworm	None
Tonsillitis	None
Warts and verrucae	None; verrucae should be covered when barefoot
Whooping cough	2 days from starting antibiotics or 21 days from onset of symptoms if no antibiotics

The NHS website has a [useful resource](#) to share with parents.

Regular appointments e.g. doctors and dentists

We encourage parents to make routine medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Of course, the school appreciates that there are situations when this is not possible e.g. hospital appointments or meetings with specialists. If a medical appointment must take place during the school day, the school requires proof of the appointment (for example an appointment letter) to be emailed to the School Office.

Tracking of attendance

We track school attendance via our school management information system (Arbor) on a daily basis to ensure registers are completed accurately and to follow up on absence. The Attendance Champion monitors attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts who need support with attendance.

Attendance Meetings are held every three weeks (HT, AHT, SENCo and Attendance Champion) in order to strategically review and target improvements. Attendance of groups of pupils (Gender, SEND, Pupil Premium, Year Groups) is monitored weekly and trends identified. Strategic targets are put in place. Key Information about trends and strategic steps is shared with the Safeguarding/Attendance Governor at least once a term and attendance data is shared with the wider governing body.

Please see below for guidance on attendance percentages and thresholds for concern.

Percentage	Implication
97-100%	Attendance is good to excellent; pupils and families should try their best to maintain high levels of attendance.
95-96.9%	Attendance levels are beginning to cause concern; class teacher will initiate a conversation with families to identify issues.
93-94.9%	Attendance levels are causing concern; at this point, Attendance Champion will send Concern Email 1 to families. <i>If a pupil has been absent for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks due to a term time holiday a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.</i>
90-92.9%	Attendance levels causing more significant concern; at this point an invitation will be sent to parents to hold a face to face attendance support meeting with the Attendance Champion to discuss how to improve attendance and agree a joint action plan. This will then have a review date (3 weeks later) to check progress against agreed outcomes.
Below 90%* Below	Attendance levels have decreased to an unacceptable level, now classified as persistent absence. Concern email 2 sent. Attendance Champion Assistant will liaise with BCP School Inclusion team to advise on potential next steps, including fixed penalty notices. An invitation will be sent to parents to hold a face to face attendance meeting with the Attendance Champion to discuss how to improve attendance and agree a joint action plan. This will then have a review date (3 weeks later) to check progress against agreed outcomes.
Continued Persistent Absence	Direct Involvement with BCP Inclusion Team with possible fast track plan.

Communication with parents

Term	Support/Actions
Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will receive an update from the Headteacher at the start of the year which includes a section on attendance. Parents will receive their child's current attendance figure at October half term. Annual Attendance Information Leaflet given to all parents at October parents' evening. Attendance for all pupils will be tracked weekly and parent phone calls will be made by Attendance Champion when attendance begins to drop. Attendance where 10 sessions have been missed within 10 school weeks (not term time holiday) will result in a face to face meeting with the Attendance Champion to set improvement targets (Plan, Do, Review) with a 15 day review. Attendance where a child has missed school due to a term time holiday (10 sessions have been missed within 10 school weeks) a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. Offer of support from SENCo/ELSA teaching assistant who has further expertise and knowledge in supporting pupils with Social and Emotional Needs. Offer of support from school Navigator (BCP employee based at Christchurch Family Hub) .
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will receive their child's current attendance figure at February half term. Attendance for all pupils will be tracked weekly and parent phone calls will be made by Attendance Champion when attendance begins to drop. Attendance where 10 sessions have been missed within 10 school weeks (not term time holiday) will result in a face to face meeting with the Attendance Champion to set improvement targets (Plan, Do, Review) with a 15 day review.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance where a child has missed school due to a term time holiday (10 sessions have been missed within 10 school weeks) a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. • Offer of support from SENCo/ELSA teaching assistant who has further expertise and knowledge in supporting pupils with Social and Emotional Needs. • Offer of support from school Navigator (BCP employee based at Christchurch Family Hub) .
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents will receive their child's current attendance data in their school report. • Parents will receive an end of year summary report regarding whole school attendance trends. • Attendance for all pupils will be tracked weekly and parent phone calls will be made by Attendance Champion when attendance begins to drop. • Attendance where 10 sessions have been missed within 10 school weeks (not term time holiday) will result in a face to face meeting with the Attendance Champion to set improvement targets (Plan, Do, Review) with a 15 day review. • Attendance where a child has missed school due to a term time holiday (10 sessions have been missed within 10 school weeks) a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. • Offer of support from SENCo/ELSA teaching assistant who has further expertise and knowledge in supporting pupils with Social and Emotional Needs. • Offer of support from school Navigator (BCP employee based at Christchurch Family Hub) .

4. Term-time holidays and exceptional circumstances

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and the school **does not authorise term-time holidays**. If pupils are to reach their potential they need to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular, uninterrupted school attendance is a key factor in helping pupils reach their potential. Every effort should always be made to avoid disruption to a pupil's education.

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Head Teachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether any request is considered as 'exceptional circumstances' rests solely with the Head Teacher. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time, the Headteacher will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional. Additionally, any request should be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the Request for Leave of Absence form. Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances.

Parents/Carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional then parents/carers will be informed of this and made aware that the Local Authority may be asked to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent/carer liable for the offence regarding each of their children.

It is important for parents/carers to note that once the school has requested that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a period of unauthorised leave in term time, they will not have an opportunity to discuss this matter further with the Local Authority. Any queries or discussions should be had prior to, or at the time of requesting the leave.

Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letters and notices

We will follow the latest guidance from BCP local authority. Currently, there are two sets of circumstances when a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning may be issued: This is when the national threshold has been met and a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks.

- 1) **poor attendance over time** - support has been provided by the school but the family has not engaged or the support has not worked.
- 2) **unauthorised leave of absence (including holidays) taken during term time** (of at least 10 sessions/5 days over a 10 week period - this could be one or more periods of absence

There is no statutory right of appeal over a penalty notice. Please refer to the BCP Code of Conduct Policy [here](#).

THE CODE OF CONDUCT WILL NEED TO BE CHANGED FROM 19th AUGUST 2024.

5. Priory School Escalation Flowchart



The Priory CE VA Primary School

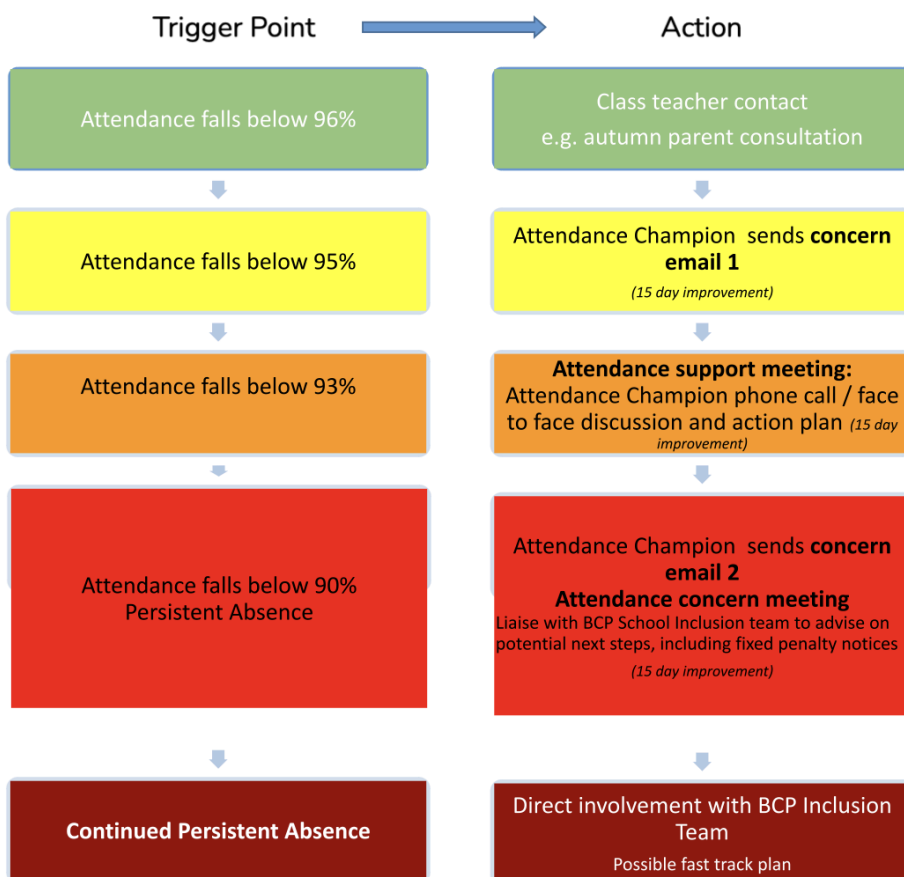
Attendance Escalation Flowchart *

Promote and Monitor

Regular promotion of the importance of 100% attendance.

Daily / Weekly monitoring by Class Teachers, Attendance Champion and SLT – all absences followed up. CPOMs used to record. Concerns raised with HT every 3 weeks.

“If we can't see a child, we do not know that they are safe – let us know if your child will not be in school”



See the latest version of [Priory attendance escalation flowchart](#).

Children Missing Education

The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. The school will therefore share information effectively with the local authority to ensure all children are safe and receiving a suitable education. Any pupils considered to be 'children missing education' will be referred to the Local Authority.

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a pupil jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the pupil has left outside of the standard transition point. This will involve contacting all emergency contacts and may involve a home visit from the school if the whereabouts of the child are not confirmed.

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that they are home educating, the school will delete the child's name from the admission register and inform the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil may be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher, Assistant Head, Attendance Champion and Governor with responsibility for attendance will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and report to the Governing body, and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements. The school keeps accurate records of attendance. It is the responsibility of the Governing body to monitor attendance and to ensure that the school policy is followed consistently and is addressing attendance concerns as a priority. The Governing body will pay particular attention to patterns of persistent absence. In the case of serious concern over attendance the Deputy Head/Headteacher will contact the BCP inclusion team directly for advice and guidance.

The Headteacher has day to day responsibility for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, but all staff, parents, pupils and Governors share responsibility for excellent punctuality and regular attendance. The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- *Child Protection policy*
- *Home School Agreement*
- *Positive Behaviour policy*

and also the following DfE document:

- ['Working together to improve school attendance' August 2024](#)

Information on expectations within BCP from the School Inclusion team can be found here:

- <https://www.bpcouncil.gov.uk/Schools-and-learning/At-school/School-attendance.aspx>

Policy Version History

Date	Comments / Reviewed:
August 2018	New policy written by Liz Kelly using the CLF (Christchurch Learning Federation) template
November 2019	Policy updated by Paul Ruffle following local government reorganisation (BCP Council from Dorset County Council)
July 2022	Full Policy rewrite as independent Priory policy by Paul Ruffle, Headteacher and Mel Fidge, DH & attendance lead in line with new DfE guidelines and BCP advice on policy practice

July 2024	Edited Deputy Head to Nominated Attendance Champion Added in table for communication/support for Autumn, Spring and Summer Updated flowchart of triggers and actions Attendance Contract to be signed annually by parents Reflects statutory guidance as of 19th August 2024 'Working together to improve school attendance' 10 sessions within a 10 week period used for indication of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Plan do Review language incorporated into our policy.
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