

# The Priory CE VA Primary School



## Attendance Policy

| Attendance Policy                                                                    |                    |                            |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Approval</b>                                                                      | Board of Governors | <b>Chairman</b>            | Sue Solly |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                                                   | Paul Ruffle        | <b>Ratification</b>        |           |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                                                           | Sept 2019          | <b>Date of this review</b> | July 2022 |
| <b>Date of next review</b>                                                           | July 2024          | <b>Maintenance</b>         | FGB       |
| NB: This updated policy is written in conjunction with BCP(local authority) guidance |                    |                            |           |

## 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 'inspiring all to learn, flourish and achieve'. 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 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 regularly
- 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](mailto: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 **Deputy Head (nominated Attendance Champion)** will take responsibility for:*

- Overall monitoring of individual and whole school absenteeism
- Contacting parents to share concerns regarding high level or inappropriate absences or persistent lateness
- 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:*

- Monitor overall attendance figures
- Work with the Head, Deputy Head and staff to improve attendance
- Liaise through the Chair of Governors with the Head about school closure.

*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
- 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
- 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
- awarding a class weekly attendance cup and displaying monthly attendance prominently in the school entrance and newsletter

### 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 9.00am.**

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 (SIMs) on a daily basis to ensure registers are completed accurately and to follow up on absence. We track weekly attendance by class to promote and celebrate collective attendance in our Celebration Worship each Friday. We also regularly monitor attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts who need support with attendance.

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

| Percentage                   | Implication                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 96-100%                      | Attendance is good to excellent; pupils and families should try their best to maintain high levels of attendance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 95-95.9%                     | Attendance levels are beginning to cause concern; class teacher will initiate a conversation with families to identify issues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 93-94.9%                     | Attendance levels are beginning to cause concern; at this point, DH will send Concern Letter 1 to families                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 90-92.9%                     | Attendance levels causing more significant concern; at this point an invitation will be sent to parents to hold a virtual/face to face attendance support meeting 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%*<br>Below          | Attendance levels have decreased to an unacceptable level, now classified as persistent absence. Concern letter 2 sent. Deputy head/school navigator will liaise with BCP School Inclusion team to advise on potential next steps, including fixed penalty notices. Attendance concern meeting with DH. 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

### 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. Please see Appendix A for a copy of 'Request for Leave of Absence in Term Time Form.'

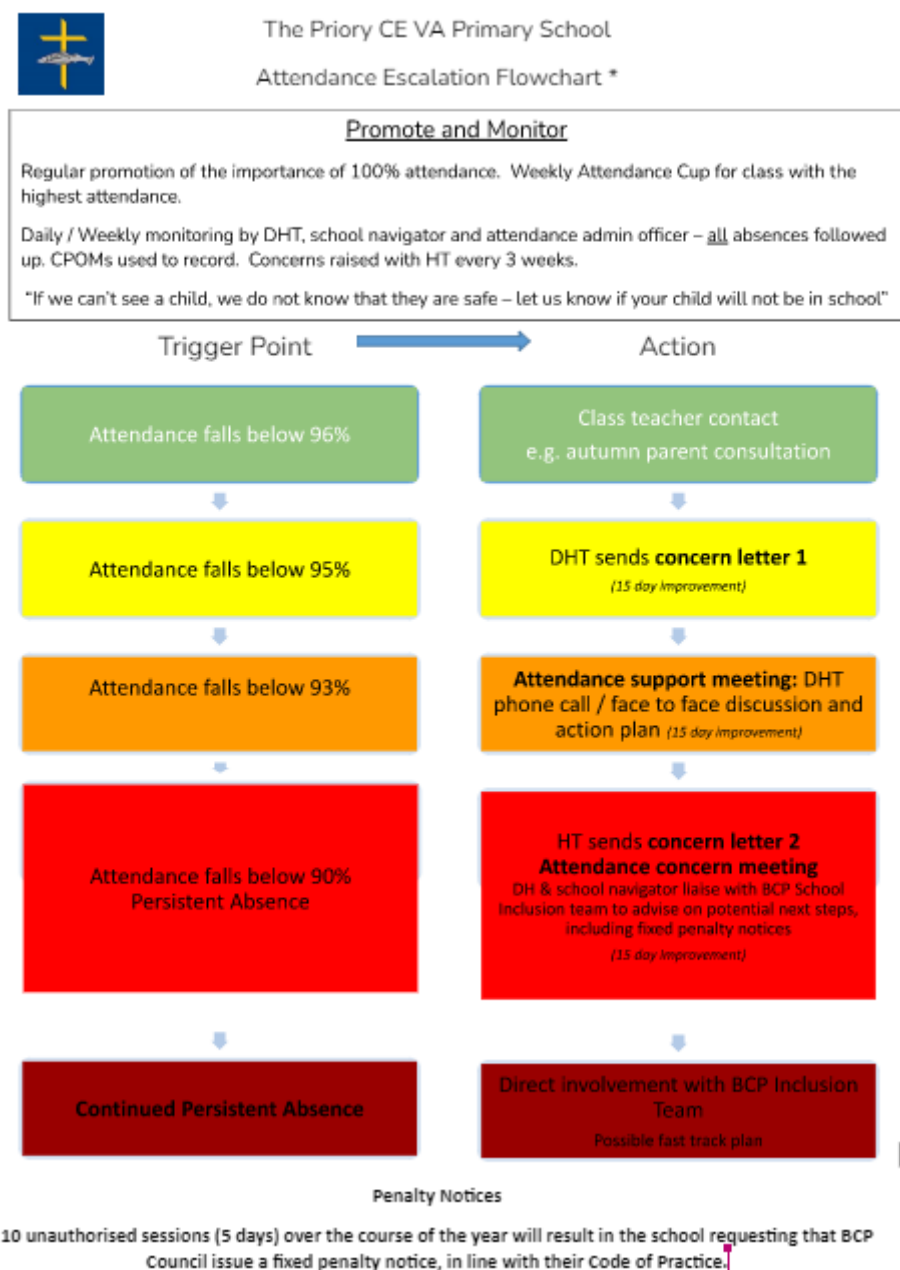
#### **5. Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letters and notices**

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:

- 1) **poor attendance over time** (at least 10% unauthorised absence); initially a formal warning letter of the possibility of a penalty notice (**school concern letter 2**) will be sent, giving 15 school days to effect improvement
- 2) **unauthorised leave of absence (including holidays) taken during term time** (of at least 10 sessions/5 days over the year - 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 Penalty Notice Code of Conduct policy](#).

## 6. Priory School Escalation Flowchart



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, Deputy Head 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:

- *School attendance: Guidance for Schools - updated April 2022*

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

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

### **Policy Version History**

| <b>Date</b>   | <b>Comments / Reviewed:</b>                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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 |