



PHOENIX

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance & Lateness Procedures

To be read with Trust Policy

Date written: September 2021

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School Procedures

These procedures were written using DFE guidance 'School Attendance' Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence (1994) an. It is not an authoritative interpretation of the law but is designed to ensure a consistent approach to attendance issues.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school and arrives on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child, and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Irregular attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. Reasons for lateness and non-attendance may be complex and outside the control of the school but school must actively pursue the goal of regular attendance by all.

Aims

- Maximise learning opportunities and promote an ethos of high achievement
- Ensure regular attendance and prompt arrival
- Expected attendance 96% and above

Objectives

- Comply with the law
- Ensure that every absence without reason and every lateness is investigated
- Discourage unauthorised absences and late arrival
- Ensure clear communication procedures with well defined staff roles
- Make effective use of the Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies (AASSA)

Promoting Good Attendance

The school will:

- Distribute from the AASSA, LA/DfE, - information leaflets to parents
- Distribute essential policy information and other supportive information
- Keep parents informed of regulations through the school newsletter
- Operate pastoral team support groups for pupils with poor attendance
- Monitor and follow up all absences and lateness
- Hold regular meetings with the Family Liaison Officer, Attendance Officer, Headteacher and AAP
- Hold half-termly attendance meetings
- Report attendance figures to the local governing board and parents (in newsletters etc)

Registers

Marking attendance registers twice daily, is a legal requirement. Pupils must be marked as present, absent, or engaged in an approved offsite activity. The register also shows whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, the head teacher has this responsibility. Individual attendance records may be used as court evidence.

Authorising Absence

The administrator in charge of attendance can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt, the Headteacher, on behalf of the local governing board, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Absence of siblings if one child is ill / or if parents are unwell
- Oversleeping

- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day, without medical evidence
- Birthdays

Any student who falls below 96% will be required to provide medical evidence and could be referred to the Attendance Advisory Service if absences are marked as unauthorised on the school register.

Sickness & Diarrhoea – If infectious, the child should be kept at home for 24 hours from the last incident. If not infectious i.e., from something eaten, 24 hours from the last incident.

Monitoring Attendance and Lateness

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be an immediate referral to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) and a pre-start attendance meeting will be held. The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

'Five Steps'

1. Parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and subsequent days. If no contact received, the following steps will be followed:
 - school to phone home
 - all other contact numbers will be called
 - home visits will be made
 - Referral to Medway Children's social care and / or police welfare may be made
2. Weekly checking of attendance with the Attendance Officer and Home/School Support Worker followed by regular checking by the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP)
3. Inviting parents/carers to a school Attendance Clinic, this may include attendance from a Governor.
4. Referring pupils with unauthorised absences to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP)
5. Formal letters from AAP leading to prosecution if there is no improvement

It will be the responsibility of the attendance administrator/s to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date and confirmed in writing
- Parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- The class/Headteacher knows of children causing concern
- Attendance monitoring figures are submitted as requested
- They meet regular with AAP to identify children for referral and complete Attendance Advisory referral forms
- All DfE regulations are adhered to
- Passes are issued to pupils off site during school time
- Parents are well informed about the law and the school policy

Unauthorised Absences

The 1996 Education Act clearly states, "If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, the parents/carer of the child shall be guilty of an offence". The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 also introduced the use of penalty notices as an additional sanction to address the problem of poor school attendance. Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school may result in prosecution in the courts or a penalty notice being issued.

The school, in conjunction with Medway Council Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA), will monitor your child's attendance. In the event that your child incurs 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a six-school week period a referral will be made to AASSA, and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent/carer on

the school's behalf. A penalty notice may be issued resulting in a £60 penalty notice, increasing to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice, within 28 days, will result in a court prosecution for your child's irregular school attendance.

Unauthorised Absence - Holidays

All pupils are encouraged to attend school every day of the 190 days that school is open. The register is called twice daily, and pupils are expected to be present for the 380 sessions, or half days. That leaves 175 days for family holidays, shopping trips and other needs.

As a school we prioritise teaching and learning, therefore, in accordance with the local and National guidelines, Phoenix Primary academy does not authorise holidays during term time. Permission may only be granted by the headteacher, in exceptional circumstances.

A request for such absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher. When requesting leave of absence during term time may you be reminded that 10 days of absence equates to 20 sessions missed schooling, which is equivalent to 5.2% of absence. Please note: any child who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences during the remainder of the academic year.

Any absences due to ill health either directly before or after a school holiday will need to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise the absence.

Notes:

- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 has made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. These penalty notices will require the recipient to pay a penalty notice, currently £60.00 if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if paid within 28 days.
- A penalty notice will be issued to each parent/ carer that resides with the child.
- Non-payment of these penalty notices will result in legal proceedings.
- If a Parent/Carer request for a term holiday is refused, but the holiday taken, it will be classified as unauthorised absence and may be subject to a penalty notice being served to each parent/ carer that resides with the child by Medway's Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA)
- A formal application must be made in writing, IN ADVANCE and returned to the headteacher.
- Permission sought after a holiday has been taken will not be granted.
- If the parent/ carer removes a student from their education for the purpose of a suspected holiday without advising the school this will be referred to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP), a letter will be sent from the school requesting that the parent/ carer contacts the school to confirm the reason for absence. No response will assume to be a holiday absence and penalty notice(s) may be issued. The Academies policy is not to authorise holidays during term time. Any applications for leave in term time must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. There is no automatic right to term time leave of absence, and your request is likely to be declined except in the most exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its own merit.

Persistent Absence

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Reporting your child's absence If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the Academy as early as possible, on the first day of absence, either by telephone or in person, and every subsequent day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence.

Lateness

Every child who arrives after 08.55 must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked with an L until 09:30 when the code will change to U unless there is an adequate explanation for the lateness. Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents by the Attendance Coordinator, called into an Attendance Clinic, or may be referred to the AASSA. Frequent lateness can provide grounds for prosecution.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing from education (CME). The Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.