



PRINCE'S MEAD

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

School attendance is critical to academic success and social and emotional development. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school, with a cumulative effect. Regular or persistent absence can also indicate a pupil welfare issue. We ask parents to help us to promote the standards of attendance and punctuality, which are essential for all pupils to get the maximum benefit from their education.

Key School Contacts

The senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance at the school is the Deputy Head Pastoral (Mr A Greenaway). For day-to-day attendance matters, please contact Matron or your child's form tutor.

Senior Attendance Champion	Alex Greenaway Alex.greenaway@princesmeadschool.org.uk 01962 888000
Key Staff / Contacts	Mandy Oakley Matron@princesmeadschool.org.uk 01962 888000

Attendance Aims

This is the attendance policy of Prince's Mead School (the **School**).

The School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
- To prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, reduce absence and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance
- To build strong relationships with families, encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality

- To respond proactively to non-attendance and/or lateness
- To work closely with pupils, their families and, if appropriate, the local authority where attendance becomes a concern

We expect the highest standard of attendance and punctuality, reflecting our commitment to wellbeing and achievement.

Regulatory Framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Education and Skills Act 2008
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, August 2024)
- [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) (DfE, August 2024)
- [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance](#) (DfE, August 2024)
- [Guidance for Parents on school attendance](#) (Office of the Children's Commissioner, July 2024)
- ['Is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#) (NHS, April 2024)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, September 2025)
- [Children missing education](#) (DfE, August 2024)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) (DfE, August 2017)
- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (DfE, February 2024)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) (DfE, November 2018)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) (DfE, February 2023)
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) (DfE, February 2023)
- [Providing Remote education: guidance for schools](#) (DfE, updated August 2024)

The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Missing child policy
- Parent Contract

The Importance of good attendance

The School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:

- The importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the School's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life
- The interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting

pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;

- The importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and Parents;
- That attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- Children missing in education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

School Responsibilities

The School acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the School community.

The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations of attendance and punctuality for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and Parents.

The School provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Staff are supportive and approachable.

Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

School Arrangements

The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers must be kept electronically. Contact details of relevant staff can be found at the front of the policy and other details about the School's arrangements can be found in Appendices 2 and 3.

Partnership with pupils and parents

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The School therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to manage poor attendance.

What the School expects of pupils:

- That pupils attend School regularly, punctually and ready to learn
- That pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment

- That pupils do not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with the School rules
- That pupils tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may discourage or prevent them from attending school

What the School expects of parents / guardians

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. The School expects parents / guardians to:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day that the School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the Head
- To notify the School of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible and to provide an explanation for this
- To arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times where possible
- To arrange holidays out of school term time
- To make any application for authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may affect their child's attendance or punctuality
- To cooperate with the School to improve attendance or punctuality if it has been raised as an issue.

What parents / guardians can expect from the School:

- A school culture that promotes good attendance
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
- Termly communication of attendance levels, in end of term report, via the Parent portal
- First day contact when absence is unexplained
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Liaison with the local authority to assist and support families where needed

Staff Responsibilities

The Head

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the School, including implementation of this policy
- Authorises exceptional leave of absence

The SAC

The School has appointed a member of the School's senior leadership team as SAC (Senior Attendance Champion) to have responsibility for attendance in School. Details of the individual appointed are at the front of this policy and are widely publicised within School.

The SAC's responsibilities are:

- To set a clear vision that promotes good attendance in school;

- To establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence if it arises and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
- To regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the School's strategies and processes;
- To have oversight of and analyse attendance data;
- Alongside the pastoral team, delivers targeted intervention and support to pupils and families; and
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues.

Form Teacher

- Promotes good attendance and punctuality
- Accurately mark the am and pm register using appropriate codes, in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Look out for trends or patterns and liaise with the Head of Year if any concerns arise
- Deliver targeted intervention and support as appropriate

Registration Procedures

Registers are a legal document, and care must be taken to ensure they are marked accurately and in accordance with the regulations. Attendance of all pupils is recorded and monitored following the procedures below:

- Morning registration is carried out from 8.20am, with the window being 8.25am-8.35am.
- Afternoon registration is carried out at 1.25pm-1.30pm, with all pupils returning to their form teacher, after the end of lunch bell is rung at 1.20pm.
- The registers will remain open for 10 minutes after the start of registration. Once the morning and afternoon registers close, a pupil will be recorded as absent if not present in the classroom / lesson. Parents should provide a note of explanation for any pupil arriving after the register has closed.
- If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed they will be recorded as a late arrival (code L).
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session without a satisfactory explanation e.g. because of an unavoidable cause, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reasons given / not given will be recorded.
- Any pupil arriving after registration period should enter from the front door and sign in at reception. They should not go directly to their form room.
- Matron checks for unaccounted absences and contacts parents where required. Concerns are passed to form teachers and the SAC.
- If any pupil has to leave school before the end of the day, they must sign out at reception.

Absence Procedures

Apart from illness, no pupil should be away from school without prior permission from the Head. All schools are expected to restrict leave of absence to the specific circumstances set out in the regulations. These are summarised below:

- Attending a medical or dental appointment (where it is not possible to make the appointment out of school hours)
- Attending an interview

- Religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances
- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad

Reporting Absence

Daily Absence

If a pupil is to be absent from School for any reason, the parent / carer should contact Matron or the school reception by email (matron@princesmeadschool.org.uk) / telephone (01962 888000) by 8.00am on the first morning of absence. The school must be notified every day or of the length of period your child will be absent due to illness.

Where a pupil is ill, the School should be notified of the nature of the illness.

Late to School

To enable us to ensure the whereabouts and safety of our pupils, we require a telephone call or email to let us know that your child will be late. When your child arrives at school it is important that they enter and sign in at Reception so that they can be registered as present.

Applications for an Authorised Leave of Absence

Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the School day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and permission must be requested in advance in writing by completing a Leave of Absence form.

The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request.

Ideally, dental or medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours or during School Holidays. If this is impossible, you must submit an application for leave of absence via the Parent Portal ensuring sufficient notice is given.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head to determine the length of time the pupil is or was permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an authorised absence.

A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which Parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence by completing a Leave of Absence application in advance.

Reporting Duties

The School has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend School and their absence is unauthorised. The School must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.

Action will be taken in accordance with the Missing Child Policy and safeguarding and child protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

APPENDIX 1: School Refusal Policy

School Refusal occurs when a pupil refuses to attend school, or lessons, on a regular basis. For the purposes of this policy, the School will be concerned about a pupil's attendance when it goes below 90% for a term and will treat as School Refusal a pupil whose attendance is typically below 75% without medical documentation.

The School recognises that School Refusal is often the consequence of poor mental health. This may be because of a general anxiety or because of something more specific, such as an approaching deadline in a particular subject. School Refusal may also be the result of a specific incident, such as peer unkindness.

The School also recognises that School Refusal is not the same as truancy. Most pupils who School refuse are well-behaved, able and keen to do well in their education but have an underlying fear of attending some or all lessons or even being on the School grounds.

Pupils who spend significant time away from School will often request for work to be sent home. Whilst work will be sent home in the short-term to keep pupils up to date, this is not a long-term solution. Time spent studying at home is not an adequate substitute for attending lessons.

The following process represents best practice in most situations of School Refusal. However, the School reserves the right to waive any and all parts of this process according to specific circumstances.

Step One

The School will work with the parents / guardians and take all reasonable measures to alleviate the cause of the anxiety. A plan will be formulated for increasing attendance of the pupil and targets set for future attendance. This will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Step Two

If, following the implementation of Step One, a pupil's termly attendance continues to be below 75%, then a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the impact on the curriculum. It may be suggested at this stage that the pupil will have to repeat their current year of schooling if attendance does not increase to above 75%.

Step Three

Pupils who reach Step Three will typically have had less than 75% attendance for a year or longer, and often their attendance will be much lower. By this stage it is possible that the Local Authority will have been contacted, as per the School's Child Protection Policy and Children Missing in Education.

If a pupil reaches this point, then they are unlikely to be able to access the education that the School is providing. This means that they may have to repeat a year of schooling or leave the School. If the pupil leaves the School the Registrar will inform the Local Authority.

APPENDIX 2: Admission Register

In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the School will:

- Maintain an admission register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the School (also known as the school roll); and
- Inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points.

The admission register must be kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The school must ensure that every entry in the School's admission register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.

The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding Parents and carers, and details of the school they last attended.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occur, the pupil's name must be deleted.

Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the School must provide it with the following information:

1. The full name of the pupil;
2. The address of the pupil;
3. The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
4. At least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency
5. The pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
6. Name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
7. The grounds (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

APPENDIX 3 Attendance Register

The School records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024.

The School uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations.

The attendance register is kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The School will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and Parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.

The School is required by law to take attendance register twice daily – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:

- Physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
- Absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or
- Attending a place other than the school; or
- Absent

The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:

- Attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;
- For an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;
- Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
- Attending a place for any other approved educational activity.

Recording Absence

Absence will be recorded in accordance with the national absence codes set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024 and statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance relating to:

- Leaves of absence;
- Other authorised reasons;
- Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause;
- Unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

The 'unauthorised absence' code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance or where no explanation has been given meaning that the code for 'unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance' is not appropriate. Examples include:

- The reason for absence has not been provided;
- A pupil is absent from school without authorisation;
- A pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.