

POLICY FOR PUPILS' SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

September 2023



Version: September 2023
Ratified by the Governing Body: 26th September 2023
Signed by the Governing Body: *Wendy Sartain*
To be reviewed (annually): September 2024

This policy has been reviewed and updated with consideration given to the principles and the ethos outlined in the UN Convention for the rights of the child -.Article 28

The Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

POLICY FOR PUPILS' SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Introduction

This policy sets out the systems and procedures at The Pines School for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance. We encourage the whole school community to be involved with systems and procedures. The aim of the policy is to ensure the regular attendance of all pupils to ensure they receive their full educational entitlement.

Aims:

- At The Pines School 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
- To encourage and reward good attendance through the presentation of termly certificates and annual awards for individuals and class groups.

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

Objectives:

To ensure the regular attendance of pupils we will:

- Implement comprehensive registration procedures and processes
- Ensure all absences are rigorously followed-up (this includes lateness)
- Report all unexplained absences to the local authority school attendance support team.
- Ensure parents are aware of the school's expectation of attendance to be at least 90%

Our ultimate aim is to achieve high levels of attendance for all our pupils.

Registration

The register is taken twice a day, at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions (9am and 1.00pm). The class teacher takes registration electronically via the SIMS database (should the system be inaccessible then the teacher must continue take a handwritten register of attendance and ensure this is taken immediately to the office). Cut off times for the class teacher to complete the register are 9.30am and 1.20pm, which is the close of each registration period.

The register will show whether the pupil is present, absent or engaged in an off-site activity.

Absences for all pupils of compulsory school age show whether the absence is one where: the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be out of school or HAS ACCEPTED an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for absence.

All other absences will be recorded as unauthorised and may be referred to the school's Attendance Advisory Practitioner. NB Parents may not authorise any absence; only the Headteacher may do this. All absences are treated as unauthorised until the school agrees and accepts an explanation as satisfactory.

Registration codes used at The Pines School are as follows: (The school records data in the SIMS database.)

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
D	Dual registration
C	other authorised circumstances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
G	Family Holiday (not agreed or days in access)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registration closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason provided yet for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
Y	If the school is temporarily closed (e.g., due to severe weather/heating failure etc),

Monitoring of Absence

The school office will check registers on a daily basis and make a note of all pupils. The process for this is as follows:

- Clerical Officer to identify absent pupils from the completed register.
- Checks to be undertaken to establish whether the absence is known (i.e., reported previously as a medical appointment).
- Telephone call to be made to parents/carers of absent pupil from 9.30am requesting an explanation for the absence (if a call in to school or message through

dojo has not been received). Call attempts should be made to all available contact numbers.

- Pupil absence telephone call log to be updated with details of call and outcome of conversation.
- If a message is left, the call should be repeated if a return call has not been received within 2 hours. Calling from a school mobile phone should also be attempted.
- If no contact has been made with the family, including the emergency contact number, by the end of the third day of absence, school will conduct a safe and well check at the home address. If there are safeguarding concerns, then relevant agencies will be contacted such as the police or Birmingham children's safeguarding team.
- Each term, the attendance Lead (Deputy Head Teacher) will conduct a percentage analysis to discuss pupils whose attendance is under 90% (without medical impact) or where there are cases of unauthorised absence with the local authority school attendance support team.

Collating and analysing attendance data

Attendance Office staff are responsible for the collation and of attendance data. This task is undertaken each week. Deputy Headteacher, with responsibility for attendance, is alerted by office staff of:

- Any pupil who has an unauthorised absence
- Any pupil who has authorised absence of more than one week's duration (e.g., has been sick for more than one week)

Senior staff will investigate and contextualise the data further (e.g., examine the pupils' previous attendance history, discuss the absence with classroom staff to verify illness etc). If parents repeatedly fail to provide satisfactory reasons for the absence, the Deputy Headteacher will invite parents for an attendance review meeting. This may involve putting a formal support plan in place.

Illness, medical and dental appointments

It is noted that some pupils at The Pines School may have high numbers of appointments because of their complex medical needs. If a pupil is an irregular attendee, sight of an appointment card or letter will be required. Office staff and class teachers will keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to the site via the class register and the signing in/out system in case of an emergency. Class teachers must advise the office of any messages from parents referring to appointments during the school day. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, senior staff will refer to the school nursing team, and or the pupils GP.

Long term sickness (authorised by medical personnel)

We support pupils who are absent for long-term medical reasons. For example, we provide parents with advice on the delivery of individual targets at home, provide homework and promote access to our equipment through loan libraries. Pupils who have been absent for some time due to long-term illness may receive support from the Home Bridging Team or James Brindley School. Where appropriate classroom staff and the Home School Liaison Teacher liaise with these services to facilitate the gradual re-integration of the child into school. The rate of re-integration is appropriate to the individual pupil and established by discussion and agreement with the Headteacher.

Leave of absence for holidays

School may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance. Such circumstances may include (but is not limited to)

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time
- leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months)
- Family emergency or religious observance.

Requests for holiday absence are dealt with individually and only after the parents have made a written request to the school. The school requires a period of notice of (14 days) to consider a request. The Headteacher will ensure a letter is sent to parents authorising or declining leave of absence requests. Should parents decide to take their child/ren on a leave of absence, despite being informed the absence will be unauthorised. It is at the Headteachers discretion as to whether to request a fixed penalty notice to be issued. If this is sought, Parents must pay £120 for each pupil within the household within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay within 28 days will lead to prosecution.

Penalty Notices

If it comes to the attention of a local authority that a child is not receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at a school, the LA has a duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to serve a notice or a school attendance order to the parent. 2007 Regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fail to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £120 within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay within 28 days will lead to prosecution. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Evaluation Monitoring and Review

Regular review by the leadership team will ensure practices are being followed appropriately and that:

- Absences are being rigorously followed up.
- Data is being effectively analysed
- senior staff are taking appropriate course of action in respect of non-attendance

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SMT, in consultation with staff, Governors, parents and other involved professionals) to ensure the needs of pupils are being met.

The policy will be deemed to be effective if attendance rates remain high. This will demonstrate that the policy supports regular attendance and ensures that non-attendance is dealt with efficiency and effectively.

The policy will also be reviewed in the light of change in DfE Legislation / Ofsted requirements / LA requirements.