

Purbrook Park School

Enjoy Enrich Excel



Attendance Policy

Co-ordinator: Luke Atiyah

Start date: September 2024

Review date: September 2025

Rationale

At Purbrook Park School, we expect excellent attendance from everyone and recognise that when pupils are fully engaged in their learning and happy in school, their attendance is likely to be strong. The Headteacher, SLT and Governors strive to support all pupils in achieving 100% attendance and good punctuality. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.

Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less well in school.

As a school, we also believe that parental support is vital if pupils are to maintain excellent levels of attendance. Working together with parents, we seek to recognise any barriers affecting attendance. It is essential that pupils attend school every day on time. The development of these routines around attendance and punctuality, not only support strong progress in school but also establish these habits for the future and the world of work.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and pupils under the age of 18.

With this in mind, and in relation to attendance, schools should:

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
2. Ensure every child has access to full-time education
3. Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly. All pupils must be punctual to their lessons.

As discussed in this policy, all staff, pupils and parents are responsible for attendance. Those with a specific remit for improving attendance are:

Luke Atiyah **Director of Inclusion**

Hayley Udy **Attendance Officer**

Responsibilities

Below is a list of responsibilities within the school, pertaining to attendance.

Senior Leadership Team:

- Set attendance targets as part of the School Improvement Plan and monitor progress towards achieving them
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote good attendance, and that these are being implemented effectively
- Determine, in collaboration with the Attendance Officer, whether to authorise any proposed absences requested or any absences that have already taken place which were not requested
- Notify parents as appropriate that failure to attend regularly by a pupil of compulsory age could lead to legal prosecution of the parents
- Make a termly report to Governors.

Attendance Officer:

- Oversee the attendance arrangements and ensure they are working efficiently
- Ensure regular checks of the registers, thereby monitoring pupil absence
- Ensure regular checks of absence notes and ensure unaccounted absences are followed up
- Arrange appropriate training for staff and deal with issues of inadequate registering
- Advise SLT on further improvements and progress towards set targets
- Produce summary data on attendance as requested by SLT
- Manage legal interventions including the use of penalty notices
- Contact home where patterns of poor attendance are causing concern
- Liaise with the House Leader/Raising Standards Leader to plan assemblies on attendance and materials for the tutor programme.

The House Leader/Raising Standards Leader:

- Liaise with Attendance Team on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Advise team of tutors in addressing any pupils with attendance below 97%
- Support Attendance Officer in initiatives
- Contact home where patterns of poor attendance are causing concern
- Promote good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities.

Tutors:

- Support assemblies and deliver attendance aspects of the PDL curriculum
- Keep the House Leaders/Raising Standards Leaders advised of suspected truancy
- Advise the House Leaders/Raising Standards Leaders of any underlying problems that may account for absence
- Promote good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities.

Classroom Teachers:

- Take a register of attendance of pupils to lessons within the first five minutes
- Take action if internal truancy is suspected: contact the House Leaders/Raising Standards Leaders/Lead Teacher
- Inform the House Leaders/Attendance Officer of persistent absences
- Promote good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities.

Pupils:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive in school on time
- Go to all their lessons, including PDL and Enrichment, on time
- Take responsibility for registering at the Pastoral Hub if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Parents and Carers:

Ensuring their child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law. Therefore, parents will:

- inform the school on the first day of absence
- discuss with the Attendance Officer any planned absences well in advance
- make a request for leave of absence following Hampshire County Council guidelines
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a telephone is unavailable
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-essential medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence if it is for exceptional circumstance.

The Law

The Law States that all children of compulsory school age should attend school regularly to obtain the maximum benefit from their education. Parents must ensure their children attend school regularly. The 1996 Education Act Section 7, states that parents are required to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. The Act (section 576) also defines "parent" to include:

- All parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a parent, has care of a child or young person.

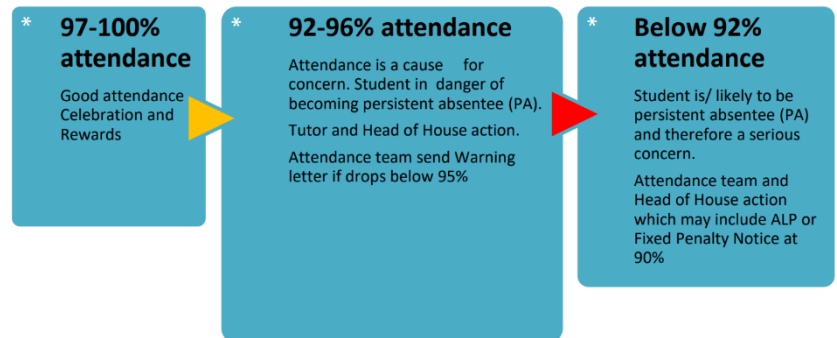
Having care of a child or young person means that a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

Why Regular Attendance is Vital

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.

- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.

- Learning: - any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.



What to do if your Child is Absent

Whatever efforts are made by the school staff, it is ultimately parents' responsibility to see that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If parental support is not forthcoming, strategies to encourage good attendance may fail. It is parents' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence as promptly as possible and to provide any further information which may be required.

For any absence other than sickness, a Leave of Absence Form must be completed. Your child can collect one of these from the Pastoral Hub. Parents are expected to attend meetings with school staff when necessary, in relation to their child's attendance and take an active role in improving their child's attendance. Where children have individual targets for attendance, parents are expected to work with school staff to ensure those targets are met.

In case of absence, parents should:

- Contact the school before 8.30am on the first day of absence, giving a reason and approximate anticipated length of absence.
- Make every effort to ensure medical/dental appointments are made out of school hours. If this is unavoidable, the school should be informed in advance. The school reserves the right to mark as unauthorised any time taken for medical/dental appointments when the pupil is not accompanied on return to school by an appointment slip.

Registration

Registers are legal documents that may be used as evidence where parents are being prosecuted for attendance offences. They are retained by the school even after a pupil has left school. The governing body is legally responsible for ensuring the school maintains accurate admission and attendance registers. Registers at Purbrook Park School are completed using the SIMS system. In the register, pupils will be entered under their legal

name on their birth certificate or as changed by deed poll; their known name may be shown on the register in brackets.

It is the responsibility of each teacher to ensure that information is accurately entered onto the SIMS register as follows:

- AM and PM registers must be completed.
- All pupils should be registered in every lesson unless there is a clear reason not to do so.
- Registers must be completed using agreed symbols for SIMS. Teachers are responsible for taking the register, not pupils.

Absence from School

When a pupil is absent without explanation, school will endeavour to contact the parent as soon as possible. Notes, records of telephone calls and medical certificates/evidence will be kept on file and referred to as and when appropriate, e.g. If legal action is required. School will closely monitor the attendance of all pupils. School and the Attendance Officer work closely together to identify children at risk of becoming persistent absentees (PA's) i.e., below 90% attendance and will offer support to parents as appropriate.

Understanding Types of Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised
- Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings or truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained.

The school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday. The school reserves the right to decide on an appropriate attendance code to use for the records.

Promoting Strong Attendance

Attendance is given a high profile in school and its links to learning and achievement are reinforced through:

- PDL Sessions
- Assemblies
- Daily absence texts sent for all absentees, followed by home visits if necessary.
- The Pastoral Team, including our Attendance Officer.
- Good attendance of individuals is publicly celebrated half termly rewards

Strategies for Maintaining and Improving Attendance

Strategies for maintaining and improving attendance may include:

- Verbal praise, encouragement and acknowledgement.
- Parent and pupil awareness as to the importance of good attendance – regular information given in: assemblies, Tutor time, rewards, Parents' evenings.
- Key member of staff responsible for providing attendance data and monitoring consistency of records across the whole school.
- Concerns regarding attendance are discussed in Welfare meetings, and RSL meetings.
- Prompt follow-up on absence – 1st day contact made with home via text and followed up by home visits or calls where necessary.
- House Leaders, SENCO or senior leaders to have identified strategies for helping pupils return from absence and, in addition, tutors offer supportive advice to returning pupils.

Addressing Poor Attendance & Lateness

We monitor each pupil's attendance very closely, and especially those who are at risk of falling into this category. When a pupil's attendance falls below 95% the following actions will ensue:

- Stage 1 – Letter home notifying parent/carer that their child's attendance has dropped below 95% and is a concern.
- Stage 2 – Formal letter from school expressing our continued concern that a pupil's attendance has not improved.
- Stage 3 – Formal letter requiring that parent/carer provides medical evidence to support absence related to illness and advising that absences will be unauthorised unless evidence is provided.

- Stage 4 - Parent/carer invited for a formal meeting at the school. Attendance contract signed – Penalty Warning given verbally.
- Stage 5 – Formal letter sent if parent/carer fails to attend a formal meeting on two consecutive occasions. Letter advises that a FPN or Legal Team referral will be made if attendance does not improve.
- Stage 6 – Formal letter to parent/carer advising that a referral has been made to the Attendance Legal Panel or Fixed Penalty Notice given.

In addition to this formal process, the school will do the following:

- The Attendance Officer, a House Leader, or Pastoral Support Assistant will liaise with local GP's if poor attendance seems to be linked to medical problems.
- Our Attendance Officer, and other members of our Pastoral Team will meet with and offer support to parents whose children have attendance/ punctuality issues.
- Pupils arriving at school after 8:30am will be marked as 'L' by the House Leaders.
- A daily text goes out for all pupils who arrive late at school.
- Pupils arriving late for school will complete a 15-minute late detention with a senior member of staff at the end of the day.
- Pupils who fail to attend this late detention, will be given an hour detention of Friday.

Safeguarding Pupils who do not Attend School

- On the first day of absence, a text will be sent initially. If no response a second text will be sent which will be followed up by a home visit or a phone call made to the parent. This will be repeated for all subsequent days of absence.
- If no contact is made with home and a second day of absence immediately after the first, the above process will be repeated.
- If school are unable to contact home on the third day, having made further enquiries, including to other family members, the school will begin 'child missing in education' procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance.
- If a child is absent for 10 consecutive days, we are required to notify the Local Authority that the child is 'at risk of being missing.'

A child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should the parent/carer do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to

attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents, guardians or carers should contact the House Leader immediately to openly discuss the issue (please see the school website for details). The child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important that the school identifies the reason for the child's reluctance to attend school and works with the parent/carer and child to tackle the problem. In some cases, parents/carers may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of the child's difficulties with another professional.

Child Leaves Site Without Permission

In the event of a pupil leaving the school site without permission parents will be contacted immediately. Should the school be unable to contact an adult with parental responsibility the police will be contacted to inform of a missing child. The school will ensure that if the police have been contacted follow up calls to parents will be made to confirm the child is safe.

Using Penalty Notices

Where a child has unauthorised absence, the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct, issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document which ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

The Code of Conduct states that schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late before the close of register (coded L), but the school has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness, and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met ... unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

Penalty Notices will only be issued, following recommendation from the Headteacher. If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a Penalty Notice is issued for:

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10-week school period

This includes where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence, or

- a holiday that has been taken without permission.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, after submitting an Absence Request Form or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence, the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parents/carers for each child. NB: This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday: one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid, Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: if you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences, additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any further unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information please visit Hampshire County Council's website at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.

Removing a Pupil from Roll

When a pupil leaves Purbrook Park School, they will not be removed from the school roll until one of the following is the case:

- Until they have been accepted onto the roll of another school.
- Until we have authorisation from the Local Authority (LA) to remove the child from the school roll.

Requests from Parents for Elective Home Education

Purbrook Park School is clear with parents that EHE is not a solution to attendance issues.

- If a school receives notification of EHE they should offer a meeting with the parent

- A letter should be written to the school by the parent stating they wish to home educate
- The school will forward a copy of the letter with the parent and child details to ehehamshire@hants.gov.uk
- The Local Authority may then contact the parent
- If the school is concerned regarding a request for an EHE from a parent of a child they will contact the Local Authority
- Purbrook Park School will also direct parents to the linked website

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/educationinclusion/service/electivehomeeducation>

Suspected Changes of Address

When it is suspected that a family has moved away from the area without notifying the school, reasonable enquiry to locate the child will be undertaken. After a period of 4 weeks the child will be removed from the school roll and their name will be placed on the school to school (S2S) site for missing children.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. The school will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Policy is reviewed every year by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors as part of the self-evaluation cycle. Appropriate action is taken if changes are required.

Other Relevant Policies

This Policy should be used with reference to one or more of the following policies:

Admissions Policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Anti-Bullying

Behaviour Policy