



Attendance Policy

Date Approved	23 November 2020
Date of Next Review	November 2022
Policy Owner	Head Teacher
Approved by	School Improvement Committee

1.INTRODUCTION

The school staff and Governors of Prior's Mill CE School, alongside the Local Authority (LA), firmly believe that it is essential for all pupils to attend school regularly and avoid any absence. Any loss of time at school can adversely affect a child's attainment and all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

The philosophy of 'Every Day Counts' is actively promoted.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

2.LEGAL DUTY

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer. In education law a parent is defined as:

- any person who is a natural parent of the child, whether they are married or not, any person who has parental responsibility for the child,
- any person who has care of the child i.e. they live with and look after the child on a day to day basis

3.SAFEGUARDING

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. If your child is absent it is imperative that you contact the school on each day of absence either by phone, email or in person to inform us of the reason for the absence. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

4.REPSONSIBILITIES

Parents:

- To ensure their child/ren attend school each day on time.
- To ensure that the child/ren arrive at school punctually and properly prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school before 9am each day that their child/ren are unable to attend school to explain the reason for the absence. Contact can be made in person, by phone or email.
- To make non urgent medical appointments outside of school session times.
- To provide appointment cards or hospital letters as evidence of medical appointments if attendance is currently being monitored by the Education Welfare Officer due to being below expected levels.
- To contact the school if they are concerned or aware of any reason that may cause

their child to be reluctant to attend school so that this can be discussed and a solution to the issue found promptly.

Pupils

- To attend school regularly and on each day the school is open to pupils.
- To arrive punctually and appropriately prepared for the start of day.
- To discuss with their class teacher any problems that might make them feel reluctant to attend school.

School

- To keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils twice daily.
- To contact any parent whose child is absent from school without a reason provided.
- To report to parents at least annually on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments.
- To celebrate and reward good or improved attendance.
- To investigate any patterns of absence or regular absence by the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer.
- To request medical evidence in order that absence can be authorised where there are frequent illness absences.
- To unauthorise any absence that is not for a valid reason or where a reason for absence has not been provided by the parent.

Governors

- To ensure that school has effective systems and procedures in place to achieve good attendance and punctuality for all children.
- To support the school staff in taking steps to enforce school attendance by for example attendance at Attendance Case Conferences.

5.UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every **half-day absence** from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or any other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. Examples include:

- parents keeping children at home without a reasonable explanation
- absences which have not been explained
- children who arrive at school after the registers have closed (more than half an hour late)
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to Prior's Mill Primary School requesting that the local authority impose legal sanctions such as penalty notice fines or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best addressed between the school, the parents and the child. We encourage parents to raise any concerns of this nature as early as possible with the class teacher in the first instance.

6.PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

Any child will be classed as a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more of their time at school **no matter what the reason**. This includes absence due to genuine illness and holidays taken in term time. Absence at this level will be causing considerable damage to the child's educational progress.

Persistent absence is measured each half term and the school reports on this to the local authority. You will be informed by letter each half term if your child falls into this category and asked to work with the school to improve your child's attendance.

Our Education Welfare Officer may also invite you to attend an attendance improvement meeting at school to talk about the reasons for absence and to agree a plan to improve your child's attendance. If attendance is still a concern following this meeting, then the school may involve the local authority Attendance Officer. Their involvement may mean that you are issued with a penalty notice or invited to an Attendance Case Conference.

7.PUNCTUALITY

Good punctuality is expected. We actively discourage late arrival at school due to the impact it can have on both the individual child and the rest of the class. Arriving late to school can be embarrassing for the child and also disruptive to the rest of the class.

The school gates are open at 8.30am. The school day starts at **8.40am**, and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.50am** and your child will receive a late mark if they arrive after the register has been taken.

At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Persistent lateness will be investigated by the Education Welfare Officer who may contact you by phone or via a home visit. You may also be asked to attend an attendance meeting so that an agreed plan to ensure punctual arrival at school can be agreed.

If you are experiencing any problems getting your child to school on time, please let a member of staff at school know. Often, we can provide advice and guidance to help resolve any issues.

8.HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. The school holiday dates are published in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays and not in during term time as this has a detrimental impact upon the child's education.

Holidays or leave of absence during term time can only be given if there are exceptional circumstances. This is in line with the national regulations on leave of absence for term time leave. We define exceptional circumstances as an unplanned or unexpected situation that is highly unlikely to be repeated.

Should parents choose to take their children out of school during term time or feel they have exceptional circumstances for the leave then they must complete a leave of absence form and submit this to the school for consideration before any holiday is booked and with at least four weeks' notice of the leave/ holiday taking place.

Any holiday absence that is taken without prior application to the school will automatically be unauthorised and penalty notice procedures followed.

The leave of absence form can be obtained from the school office or by downloading it from the school website. Each application is considered individually and will be responded to in writing from school. The possible outcomes to any application are;

- The leave is authorised by the school (exceptional circumstances must be found);
- The leave is unauthorised but the school does not request that the local authority issue a penalty notice fine;
- The leave is unauthorised and a penalty notice fine is requested from the local authority.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent for each child at a rate of £60 per parent, per child. The fine is payable in full (no part payments are excepted) within 21 days of the date of issue. If the fine remains unpaid it doubles to £120 per parent per child payable in full between day 22 to 28 of the fine being issued. This means that if a family consists of two children and two parents they could be issued with a fine of £240 rising to £480 if not paid within 21 days. If the fine remains unpaid parents can be summoned to the Magistrates court and face a fine of up to £1000.

9.CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

The school with the local authority has a duty to ensure that if any child stops attending school, the circumstances around the child missing education are investigated. Where it is believed the

family have moved away without informing the school then the school will refer the matter to the local authority Children Missing Education Officer.

If parents inform the school that they are moving or relocating out of area and provide details of a forwarding address the school and the local authority may be able to provide assistance in getting the child a school place in a school local to their new address.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME (exceptional circumstances only)

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Name of Pupil(s)	
Date(s) of Birth	
Class(es)	
Address	
Contact Number(s)	
Siblings attending a different school	

I request permission for my child to be absent from school between:

First Day of Absence	
Date of Return to School	
Total School Days	

Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the Head Teacher to consider
(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Declaration

I have read and understood the information about leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should my child take leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head Teacher.

Signature..... Date.....

Parent/Care

BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM, PARENTS ARE REQUESTED

TO NOTE THE INFORMATION BELOW

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school during term time, but the law allows Head Teachers to consider individual requests to authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

All such requests **must** be made on this form. Letters will not be accepted.

The Head Teacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence, and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact.

The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made in advance and the Head Teacher or EWO may contact the parent to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the circumstances relating to a request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the Head Teacher, the expectation is that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.

If the request for leave of absence is refused and the absence is subsequently recorded as unauthorised, the Head Teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued against you.

A Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 days period, the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.

Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a penalty Notice in respect of each child.

As a parent/carer you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results.

Work will not be provided for any leave of absence.