



THE PIGGOTT SCHOOL: PRIMARY PHASE

'Go and do Likewise' Luke 10:25-37, The Parable of the Good Samaritan
We live with love and compassion, seeking help in times of need.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Author:	Headteacher and Lead Governance Professional
Approver:	Local Governing Committee
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Changes history

Version:	Date:	Amended by:	Substantive changes:	Purpose:
1	January 2025	Headteacher and Lead Governance Professional		To reflect the new DfE guidance: working together to improve school attendance

THIS POLICY WILL HELP THE SCHOOL TO FULFIL ITS AIMS BY:

1. Promoting our Christian vision and values to create a community which values all God's children.
2. Nurturing a community where all of its members can develop and learn in a safe and secure environment that celebrates and promotes engagement with learning and development.
3. Supporting individuals and their families with overcoming any barriers to full attendance and engagement with their learning, seeking help in their times of need.
4. Planning and implementing bespoke support required for individuals in order to access a full and comprehensive education
5. Ensuring and setting high expectations for high levels of attendance and punctuality in order to secure successful outcomes for all individuals, ensuring they are an enlightened generation rooted in British values advocating for positive, sustainable change.
6. Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
7. Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
8. Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
9. Acting early to address patterns of absence

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

FOR THIS TO HAPPEN THE GOVERNORS UNDERTAKE TO:

1. ensure that agreed procedures are known, acted upon consistently and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and all staff members.
2. ensure that these procedures are reviewed regularly whilst monitoring and reviewing impact, demonstrating moral and ethical leadership.
3. ensure there is shared responsibility between school staff, parents/carers and other professionals involved with students who find attending school challenging to ensure all children flourish and enjoy life in all its fullness.

4. set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
5. recognise and promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
6. make sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
7. work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
8. monitor attendance figures for the whole school and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
9. hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Attendance procedures

The Education Act 1996 requires parents /carers to ensure their child receives an efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The Supreme Court has determined that 'regular' attendance means that which is ***"in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school"*** (Isle of Wight Council v Platt) (6th April 2017).

Commitment to Attendance

As a school we recognise the clear connection between regular attendance and achievement and will, therefore, value working collaboratively with parents/carers, the school's governing body and the Local Authority to ensure that pupils achieve maximum possible attendance.

Expectations

Headteacher and SLT

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times

- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Pupils

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year unless there are good reasons for their absence
- Arrive at school on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- Know they can talk to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are worried about attendance

Parents/Carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy, their legal responsibilities with regard to their child's education and the requirement to ensure their child's regular attendance at school
- Ensure their child attends school every day throughout the academic year unless school has approved the leave of absence
- Ensure their child arrives punctually and prepared for the school day
- Communicate with the school each day if their child is unable to attend due to illness or any other unavoidable circumstance
- Avoid making medical, dental or other appointments during the school day
- Notify school of any issues that may affect their child's attendance, seeking the school's help where needed, initially speaking to the class teacher. Teachers will then raise concerns with the attendance team

- Advise school immediately of any changes to contact details and provide the school with at least two-emergency contact numbers.

School Staff

School staff will:

- Ensure registers are taken promptly at 08.45a.m. and again at start of the afternoon session using the correct codes from the DfE's guidance on school attendance
- Contact parents/carers when a pupil has failed to arrive at school and where no message explaining absence has been received by 9.30 a.m
- Send a written request via text/email to parents/carers where a pupil's absence is unexplained – *see note below on Authorised and Unauthorised Absence*
- Provide parents/carers with their child's percentage attendance if requested
- Work with parents/carers when there are concerns over a pupil's lack of regular attendance
- Notify the Education Welfare Service when a pupil fails to attend school regularly or when a pupil has missed 10 school days or more without permission: this being a legal requirement
- Where absences persist then a formal referral should be made to the Education Welfare Service which may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence OR has given approval in advance.

Unauthorised absence is when school does not accept an explanation as being reasonable justification for the absence, OR when no explanation has been provided despite a written request being sent to parents/carers, OR when the Headteacher has not approved a parent's/carer's request for leave of absence.

Parents/carers should be aware that it is the Headteacher's decision whether to authorise an absence or not. In the case of long term or frequent absences due to illness or a medical condition, supporting medical evidence may be requested. This could be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip from a doctor's surgery or a copy of a prescription. (Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for any cost.)

Punctuality/Lateness

It is crucial that pupils arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of other pupils in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time.

The classroom doors are opened at 8:40, registration takes place between 8:45 and 9:00am. Any pupils who arrive after that time will be recorded as late to school. Registers close at 9.30am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (this could lead to formal action by the Local Authority if the problem persists).

Persistent lateness by a pupil will initially be followed up by school staff and, if not resolved, will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.

Parents/carers should arrange medical, dental and other appointments outside of school time unless it is an emergency. Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.

Pupils must be signed out at Reception on leaving the school and signed back in on their return.

If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted, then it may be appropriate to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person.

Term Time Leave of Absence

At The Piggott School: Charvil Primary, we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure pupils flourish and achieve their full potential. There is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement.

The Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

We recognise that there may be occasions when a parent/carer considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence. In keeping with our Christian vision the Headteacher will review these in love and compassion and may consider these to be exceptional circumstances.

The law has removed the right for school to grant up to 10 days' leave of absence in special circumstances for the purposes of a family holiday and there is no automatic right to take any leave or holiday in term time. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

The school holiday dates, INSET days and other important dates are published on the school's website and parents/carers are asked to note these when planning holidays and family events. If

there are exceptional reasons for requesting leave of absence during term time, the following procedures will apply:

- The parent/s or carer/s with whom the pupil normally resides must complete and submit a Leave of Absence form at least one month in advance of the requested absence. Forms are available from the school website or from school reception. The Headteacher (or person authorised to do so on the Headteacher's behalf) will consider the application, and will decide whether or not the application can be granted on the basis of 'exceptional' circumstances. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending upon the specific circumstances of the particular application. School will endeavour to respond within 5 working days to the parent/s or carer/s who submitted the application.
- Where leave of absence is granted, the pupil's absence will be authorised.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

There can be many reasons why a pupil's attendance becomes a concern such as medical, anxiety or emotional needs and special educational needs and disabilities and we aim to work with parents so that we can put the best support in place to improve their attendance levels. Our attendance will make initial contact so that the right support can be given.

There are a number of strategies for helping pupil's attendance. This is not an exhaustive list:

- Providing a soft start, allowing pupils to come in earlier or later to avoid the crowds
- Providing time with a trusted adult at the start of the school day

- Providing access to breakfast club
- Giving the pupil an adult mentor
- Phone call home to the families and pupil
- Giving pupil's special jobs to do to give them purpose for coming in
- Regular meetings with families
- Supporting parents with a morning routine
- Supporting parents with pupil's medical needs
- Signposting parents to external services or making referral
- Staff attending regular Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) training and using strategies to support pupils

Monitoring and addressing Attendance Concerns

The Piggott School: Charvil Primary collects attendance and absence data daily and weekly from the registers. Data will be collected by the DfE each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the Local Governing Committee.

This collection of data also enables us to identify those pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern prompting support and outreach for children or families in need. Should this apply to your child, the Headteacher will write to you to make you aware of the concern. If your child's attendance does not show an improvement you will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to agree an Attendance Action and Support Plan. If your child's Attendance Action Plan fails to bring about the required improvement in attendance, we will consider making a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service (see details below)

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

The Education Welfare Service

If a child's Attendance Action and Support Plan fails to bring about the required improvement in attendance, the school may consider making a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service which works to support schools, parents and pupils to promote and ensure good school attendance and punctuality. However, the Service also has a statutory responsibility to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

When a pupil is referred to the Education Welfare Service there are various actions that can be taken to address attendance concerns. In certain circumstances, and in accordance with Wokingham Borough Council's Code of Conduct, Penalty Notices may be used to bring about an improvement in a pupil's attendance. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

The Fast Track Intervention may also be offered as an early intervention measure designed to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address school attendance concerns. Fast Track involves engaging parents and identifying what improvements and actions need to be achieved over a fixed time frame (usually 8 or 12 weeks).

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Changing Schools

It is important that if parents/carers decide to send their child to a different school that they inform The Piggott School: Charvil Primary in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school; and
- A new home address, if appropriate, is supplied.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and after four weeks the pupil will be registered on the S2S website as a Pupil Missing Education.

Elective Home Education

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education.

Should parents/carers wish to follow this route, they need to put this in writing to the Headteacher with a request that their child is removed from the school roll. School will then inform the Education Welfare Service and arrangements will be made to monitor the education put in place at home.