

Princes Primary School

Pupil attendance policy



November 2015

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Princes Primary School by:

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance
- Working with the local authority to pursue the maintenance of regular pupil attendance by all possible means

Access to a good education is a basic human right of every citizen and key to the development of a successful and harmonious society. The education of our young people is also central to the continuing regeneration of our city, supporting social inclusion and developing life opportunities.

Regular attendance at school is fundamental to the learning process, the raising of attainment levels and the development of a balanced educational experience. Young people who do not attend school regularly damage not only their own educational and later life opportunities, but also hamper the education of peers and harm the performance of their school and their City. Young people out of school are also vulnerable, including being far more likely to either commit or experience crime than their peers.

Addressing the issue of poor attendance is a matter for the City as a whole and is the responsibility of all parents, pupils, schools and the Authority. Many public and private key partners support this process, including Merseyside Police, Health, all support agencies working with young people and their families.

Statement from the school

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing. The code for reporting pupil absences in the registers is

strictly adhered to and Admin staff collate the data on a monthly basis for review by the Head Teacher and submit figures to the Local Authority.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

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

- ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

To support Attendance improvement Liverpool Education Authority will

- Set appropriate targets for attendance improvement as an Authority and assist schools in the setting of individual targets to meet that agenda.
- Support all schools in meeting attendance targets through the deployment of direct support and resources.
- Communicate to every school, parent, pupil and the community in general the importance of regular school attendance.
- Develop effective and innovative central practices to support the raising of attendance in schools.

The key LA responsibilities and roles are

The principal attendance support service for schools is the Pupil Attendance and Education Welfare Service (PAEWS).

The key functions are:

- To ensure that every parent is aware that in law they have the prime responsibility for ensuring the regular attendance of their children.
- To work with all parents, pupils and schools to identify barriers to regular attendance and the means to overcome them.
- To deploy an effective range of support mechanisms directly to schools to address attendance
- To deliver a range of central attendance initiatives to support the school-level agenda.
- To discharge the statutory responsibility for enforcing school attendance.

The strategies that the Local Authority deploy are

- Operational support to every school from the PAEWS under a Service Level Agreement and working to agreed Service Specification.
- Develop and maintain central attendance support initiatives, including Truancy Sweeps, Outbound Calls and the Confidential Reporting Line.
- Delivery of a coherent promotional campaign across the City to support school-level work and ensure all parents and the wider community are aware of the importance of regular school attendance.
- Assist schools in the development of best practice in respect of attendance.
- Deliver the enforcement of attendance through the Courts through the preparation, submission and actioning of appropriate cases in the Magistrates and Family Proceedings Courts.
- Develop inter-agency work with key partners in the overall social inclusion process.

To ensure attendance targets are met the Local Authority will

- Ensure that attendance matters are identified and prioritised within all Authority strategies.
- Commit appropriate resources to maintain levels of support to schools and families.
- Integrate the practices and policies of all support services to ensure delivery on attendance matters.
- Maintain a strategic overview of attendance performance and ensure appropriate response and targeting.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Attendance Policy will be achieved through

- The regular collation of attendance performance and management data at school and Authority level.
- Formal reporting on a termly basis to Select Committee on attendance matters and on annual basis to schools and Governing Bodies
- Monitoring and review of the PAEWS Service level Agreement with schools.

Procedures for parents to follow

- School requests that the parents let school know through a telephone call when their child is off sick.
- If the child has to attend a medical the parent is requested to let school know either via a phone call or through the link book.

To support attendance improvement Princes Primary School will apply the following procedures for pupil absence management

- Transport staff will continue to call for pupils unless informed otherwise.
- If a child is absent and no reason for the absence has been received by school prior to completion of the register Admin staff will phone home requesting reasons for absence and explaining the importance of attendance at school.
- If there is no good explanation a letter will be sent from school explaining the situation and requesting that the child attends school.
- School can support the family once reasons for any problems, temporary or otherwise have been given.
- If there are valid reasons then the parent will be expected to complete the necessary forms.
- If there is continued absence and no good reason for the absence the social worker (if attached to a family) will be informed to provide any extra support.
- If there is continued absence and no good reason for the absence the school will then request that the parents attend a meeting in school to discuss the issue and work towards resolving the problems.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority.

The major concern is when a child has regular time off and school has no contact or reason for the absences and attendance falls below 90%

The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Holidays in term time

Absences due to holidays taken during term time are not allowed as a rule and parents/carers are discouraged from arranging holidays or extended leave of absence during school time. However the Governors of Princes Primary School have adopted a policy which allows pupils to take five days holiday during term time and this can be extended up to ten days in exceptional circumstances.

Some parents find it difficult to take their children on holiday at busy times of the year because of the impact of their children's special educational needs. You may request leave of absence during term time via a holiday request form which can be obtained from the school office.

Authorisation will only be granted if a child's attendance is 95% or above unless a child has complex health needs which may affect their attendance over the year or there are other exceptional circumstances.

Please check with school **before** booking your holiday or your child's absence may be recorded as unauthorised and incur a financial penalty.

School will operate a formal process of application and record the frequency of such absences through a pupil's career.

Where a pupil is taken on holiday without agreement from the school a period of unauthorised absence results and may attract sanctions, including the provision of a penalty notice.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. Staff at Princes Primary School are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of pupil attendance as possible.

Reminders to parents are given in regular school bulletins.