



# Pupil Attendance Policy

**Agreed at the Full Governing Body  
Meeting 16th March 2023**

## 1. Introduction

Princes Primary School recognise that there is a clear link between attendance and pupil achievement. This policy is to help encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and to support families in achieving this.

Attendance is important as it is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues, by seeing the children on a regular basis and providing an educationally safe and secure environment.

We understand that many of our pupils have medical requirements that mean they may not be able to attend school fully. As a school, **we define regular attendance as 90% or above.**

## 2. Aims

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

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order for all children to 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.
- Providing support and advice for parents, pupils and staff in maximising attendance.

## 3. Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child who is not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. It is important for parents to provide school with information if their child will be absent from school.

### 3.1 Expectations of Parent/Carer

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

- Ensure your child arrives to school on time (ready to be collected by transport, or dropped off by 9.15am for Princes Main site, or 9am for Matthew Arnold, St Annes and Picton sites).
- Telephone school if your child will be late or absent.
- On the first day of absence, if your child is unable to attend school due to illness, please give an indication as to when your child will be returning to school.
- Contact the safeguarding team if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- Ideally medical appointments should be made out of school hours. Parents should provide evidence of medical appointments if they fall in school time. Children should attend school before/after the appointment if it is not an all day appointment

- **In case of an emergency** we need to have up to date contact numbers at all times. Please ensure you inform us of any changes as soon as possible. We require a minimum of 2 emergency contacts, and 1 emergency contact who does not live at your home address.
- **Requests for exceptional circumstances:** leave of absence for exceptional circumstances must be requested in writing to the Head Teacher. General holidays will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

### 3.2 Expectations of the school

- Telephone the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 10am.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised, a member of the safeguarding team will decide whether a home visit is required. If there are safeguarding concerns, contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absences are increasing, and we are not aware of a good reason, the parent/carer will be invited to meet the Designated Attendance Lead and/or the Pastoral Lead.
- If absences persist, a referral to an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may be required.

### 4. Understanding types of absence

Prince Primary School has to report every pupil absence, therefore it is important that parents/carers advise school of the reason for any absence, preferably by calling the school on the first day of absence.

#### 4.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation as satisfactory justification for the child not attending school on a particular day. If no explanation is received, absences can not be authorised. It is the Head Teacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absences from school.

#### 4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence, or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request.

This type of absence may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or other sanctions from the Local Authority.

### 4.3 Persistent Absence

- Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DfE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence, whether authorised or unauthorised. The DfE expects schools to intervene by this point.
- Whilst we will take in to consideration that some pupils can be absent from school for medical reasons, we have a duty of care to follow up all absences so the school can provide support to families where needed.
- Parents/Carers are asked to contact the school office in the first instance, where they will be signposted to a relevant member of staff.
- Princes Primary School will issue warning letters to Parents/Carers if their child's attendance falls below 90%.

### 5. Why is regular attendance important?

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupil's learning. It is vital for our children to be in a regular routine and accessing an educational setting. Pupils who are regularly absent can find it difficult to settle back into a routine.

**90% attendance is equivalent to a child missing half a day every week.**

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason is an offence in law (The Education Act, 1996) and may result in legal action.

### 6. How will Princes Primary support families?

The Pastoral Lead will work with families who ask for support, or those with children with attendance below 90%

- Parents will be informed as to what their child's attendance is on a regular basis.
- Parents will be invited to attend regular attendance meetings if deemed necessary to help support families and improve a child's attendance.

### 7. Leave of absence in Term time (i.e. Holidays)

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstance warrants granting leave.

Parent/carers may receive a penalty notice for taking their child on holiday during term time

**Please note:** you must inform school if a holiday is to be taken in term time, regardless of unauthorised absence. It is a safeguarding issue if school are not aware of a child's whereabouts.

## 8. People responsible for Attendance Matters at Princes

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support is vital in making every pupil's journey a success

## 9. Removal from roll

As a school we are required to:

- Inform the LA in every circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school, parents are asked to:

- Give the school comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to the school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be *missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police, and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided. The school will always conduct home visits alongside support from EWO's in these circumstances. (Children can also be classed as Missing in Education after a prolonged absence with no contact with parents, the same escalation process will be followed in these circumstances.

## Attendance Monitoring Process

