



Attendance Policy

Last updated: February 2023

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1. Rationale

Pucklechurch CE VC Primary School believes regular attendance and punctuality are important to ensure that children take part fully, in the life of school and take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by the school.

We recognise that attending school regularly and punctually is vital to the educational process and encourages a good pattern of work.

2. Purposes

- 2.1. To encourage good attendance and discourage lateness.
- 2.2. To monitor patterns of absence, including broken weeks and take actions to seek improvement if appropriate.
- 2.3. To identify unauthorized absence and take appropriate action.
- 2.4. To distinguish between authorized and authorized absence.

3. Success criteria

- 3.1. A low level of unauthorised absence is maintained and will be below LA average.
- 3.2. All registers are completed correctly and promptly.
- 3.3. Parent/carers are made aware of their responsibilities for attendance and punctuality and are involved in the discussion if the attendance and punctuality cause concern.
- 3.4. The Governors continue to be satisfied by the efforts made by the school to maintain high levels of attendance.

4. Guidelines

- 4.1. We accept our role in partnership with parent/carers.
- 4.2. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance and punctual arrival in the morning and collection at the end of the school day.
- 4.3. The school's responsibility is to support attendance and examine problems that may lead to non-attendance. To do this we keep a register of attendance at the start of every morning and afternoon session. These registers are stored electronically. Care must be taken to record information accurately.

- 4.4. Registration is completed electronically on a system called Arbor. There are separate guidelines available from the LA on how to code absence and lateness.

5. Late arrival/early departure

- 5.1. A child arriving late or leaving early may seriously disrupt not only their own learning but that of other children.
- 5.2. Late arrivals or early departures will be monitored by the Headteacher. If a child arrives after 8:45am, when registration starts or leaves before midday or 3:15pm then they and their parents/carers will report to the office, where a record is kept of the fact and noted, in case of an emergency. This will include the time of arrival/departure, the reason for being late/leaving early.
- 5.3. If a child arrives after 8:45am for a morning session or 1:00pm for an afternoon session then they will be recorded as late on Arbor.

6. Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised leave of absence e.g. for holidays, where the Head Teacher feels a child is being kept home without good reason or where a child is late and the parent/carer fails to provide an acceptable explanation or if they are later than 9.30am or 1.30pm. This will be recorded and monitored, by the Head Teacher, and, where a pattern emerges or concern arises, the school will take action i.e. invite parents into school for a school attendance meeting. If there are further unauthorised absences the school may make a referral the schools EWO and South Gloucestershire Council.

7. Holiday request

- 7.1. Parents/carers should take note that there is no right to holiday leave for pupils in term time.
- 7.2. No holiday absence will be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances. A fixed penalty notice may be requested by the school and issued by the LA.
- 7.3. In exceptional circumstances the parents/carers can write in advance to the Headteacher requesting leave of absence. The Headteacher will carefully explore why such leave of absence is necessary. Where such leave is sanctioned it constitutes authorised absence. This letter or email needs to include the dates and duration of requested absence. This should be requested a minimum of ten days in advance. The school will reply to the parents/carers in writing or by email, notifying them whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. *DFE School attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice*

8. Exceptional circumstances

Are defined as:

- 8.1. Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- 8.2. Exceptional significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you.

It may be appropriate to make allowances for parents who work for the emergency services and are only granted leave at certain time.

The Head Teacher will consider every above request individually but the following **will not meet the criteria**:

- Relatives coming to visit.
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad.
- Family day trips.
- Visiting family/friends that have different holidays.

9. Penalty Notices

If the school deems that a fixed penalty notice needs to be issued due to a child having missed more than 10 sessions through unauthorised absence, they will write to the LA to request that this happens. The fixed penalty notice amount payable is currently £60 per parent per child for those who pay within 21 days and £120 per parent per child for those who pay after 21 days but within 28 days. Penalty notices will be issued to both parents by the local authority, who also collect the fine. A further prosecution/non-payment of penalty notice could result in a fine and/or imprisonment. (Section 444 1996 Education Act). Please see below for a list of sources of further information and advice;

10. Formal guidance informing this policy

- 10.1. Education Act 1996, which states if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence.
- 10.2. Pupil regulations 2006 amended DfE 2016.

- 10.3. School attendance Parental responsibility measures, DfE – 2013.
- 10.4. Working Together to Safeguard children, DfE – 2018
- 10.5. Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE – 2022.
- 10.6. Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, DfE – 2013.
- 10.7. Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, DfE 2015.
- 10.8. Children Missing in Education, DfE – 2016.
- 10.9. Working together to Improve school attendance, DfE – September 2022
- 10.10. South Gloucestershire Council local code of conduct with regards to issuing of Education Penalty notices
- 10.11. www.southglos.gov.uk

11. Promoting Good Attendance

- 11.1. To promote good attendance and punctuality in order to develop good habits of routine and structure will benefit the whole school community.
- 11.2. The Headteacher and Governors set an aspirational percentage target (currently 97%) for attendance each year and this is reviewed annually.
- 11.3. The Headteacher and Governors also wish to decrease the number of broken weeks (30% as set by the LA) and lateness.

12. Working with Parents

- 12.1. Children with a cumulative attendance of 90% or less will be notified by letter that the school is concerned and the Headteacher will arrange a meeting/telephone appointment to discuss.
- 12.2. Absences to be reported to parents as both a percentage and number of days/sessions missed.
- 12.3. Parents/carers must inform school before school starts if child is absent from school. If no contact then the office will ring home. Any child who has a Child Protection or Child in Need plan or is Looked after or Post-Looked after will be contacted first.
- 12.4. If there are concerns about a child's continued absence then parent will be asked to get medical evidence. The school can ask parents to sign a GP consent form and send a letter to the GP asking for supportive feedback.

- 12.5. Patterns of late arrival may prompt requests for further support through Early Help and Assessment Plan (EHAP).

13. Formal Appointments

While we appreciate that medical appointments and examinations have to be taken when they are on offer, parents/carers are encouraged, where possible, to make them after school or during the school holidays. If that is not possible then an appointment should be made so that the child misses as little school as possible and preferably at end of school day. Parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence of appointments

14. Children Missing in Education

We have fully adopted South Gloucestershire's policy for Children Missing in Education. Where a child is missing, this policy will be closely followed to alert the correct authorities to the fact the child is missing, to seek a response from parents as to the whereabouts of the child and to seek advice on how to proceed to best safeguard the child. Even if a child's whereabouts is known to the school, they may seek to remove them from roll after 100 consecutive missed sessions but this will always be done in agreement and knowledge of governors.

Please see South Glos Guidance for further information:

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/behaviour-and-attendance/children-missing-education/>

Follow Guidance from, for any additional requirements: (CME)

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/children/education/missing>

15. Elective Home Education

Conclusion

During the school year we wish to encourage the highest possible individual attendance rate to ensure that pupils achieve their full potential and view this procedure as a necessary and important objective.

- 15.1. Parents have a right under section 7 of the Education Act (1996), to home educate their child, so long as it is suitable to their age, ability and needs. There are many reasons why a child may be electively home educated and may include ideological preferences, health or mental health reasons or previous negative school experiences.
- 15.2. Parents should notify the school when they are choosing to home-educate their child. This should normally be in writing and the school must delete the

child's name from the admission register and inform the local authority. Where a school is notified verbally, they must still inform the local authority at the earliest opportunity. Parents are not required to provide a reason for the decision to home educate.

16. Conclusion

During the school year we wish to encourage the highest possible individual attendance rate to ensure that pupils achieve their full potential and view this procedure as a necessary and important objective.

17. Monitoring and review

- 17.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 17.2. **Pucklechurch CE VC Primary School's** attendance target is **96 percent**.
- 17.3. This policy is reviewed every **three years** by the **headteacher**; the next scheduled review date for this policy is **February 2026**.
- 17.4. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

