



# **Penn Fields School Attendance, Registration and Punctuality Policy**

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## **Attendance, Registration and Punctuality**

The staff and governors of Penn Fields regard good attendance and punctuality as high priority. We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and punctuality. Penn Fields regards Education as paramount whilst being sympathetic and supportive to individual family and medical circumstances. Our aim is to ensure our school works in partnership with parents, carers, our local community and the local authority to support and promote good attendance and punctuality.

### **In order to achieve these aims the school will:**

- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration.
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, governors and pupils value attendance and punctuality.
- Comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Have systems in place offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance and punctuality.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures.
- Support governors in taking an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies.

## **Expectations**

### **The school expects its pupils to:**

- To attend regularly and on time.
- To be prepared appropriately for the school day.
- To comply with the school policies and procedures.

### **The school expects its parents/carers:**

- To encourage their children to attend school every day, on time.
- To contact the school on the first day of absence.
- To arrange holidays and where possible, medical appointments outside school hours.
- To regularly update emergency contact details.

## **Registration**

The school uses an electronic (computerised) system of registration. The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (E.g. to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day.)

The registers are marked at the beginning of each session, morning and afternoon. Registers are marked in the first 10 minutes of the start of the school day. Registers are submitted to the office by 9.15am, the registers are closed at 9.30am.

School begins at 8.30am. The pupil entrance gate is locked at 8.50am. School finishes for at 3.00pm for lower school pupils and 3.05 pm for secondary aged pupils.

Pupils arriving after 8.50 am must enter the school via the main entrance at the front of the building where they will be met by the Admin Staff. They will record the pupil's name, time of arrival and reason for lateness.

Registration will be taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session. 13.15pm.

We all have a responsibility to encourage punctuality. It is important that every child arrives in school on time.

### **Authorised Absence**

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Religious Observance in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.
- Medical or Dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Where possible parents/carers should try to arrange these appointments for out of school hours.
- Special circumstances (authorised by the Headteacher)
- Permanent or fixed term exclusions.
- From the 1st September 2013, the new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from school.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy – a pupil is away from school without authority from the Headteacher. This includes parentally condoned absences.
- Late after registration is closed i.e. after 9-30am (unless the pupil or parent provides a legitimate reason or evidence for the absence.)
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone.
- Staying at home to look after a siblings or sick relatives.
- Going shopping, airport to meet relatives or having hair cut etc.
- Any family holiday that has not been authorised by the Headteacher.

### **Patterns of Absence**

First day of absence:

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer should contact the school on 01902 558 640 or a text a message can be sent to the school telephone number. If a parent/carer does not inform the school, the Welfare Officer/Admin staff will ring the parental home on the first day of absence, send a text message or undertake a home visit to ascertain why the child is absent.

The school is aiming to achieve an attendance target of 95.0%. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% and a parent/carer fails to inform school there is a clear strategy of intervention in place.

### **Escalation of Intervention**

#### **If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% (GREEN STAGE)**

- A letter is sent home raising the concern as to the child's attendance dipping. (Attendance awareness 1)
- The Welfare Officer will speak to the pupil on their return to school.
- The pupil's percentage attendance will be monitored for 4 weeks.

#### **If a pupils attendance falls below 90% (AMBER STAGE)**

- A letter will be sent home to the parents and they will be invited in to school to discuss their child's attendance with the Education Welfare Officer. The Education Welfare Officer may make a home visit to discuss concerns (Attendance awareness 2).
- Targets will be set to improve the attendance and the attendance will be monitored over a two week period.
- An attendance contract will be agreed with both the parent and pupil.
- Fixed penalty notice warning will be given.

#### **If a pupils attendance falls below 85% (RED STAGE)**

- Parents will be invited in to school to an Attendance Meeting together with the Education Welfare Officer.
- An action plan will be set up.
- A school attendance contract and support plan will be incorporated and Penalty Notice will be discussed.
- Outside agencies may be involved.
- If there is no significant improvement in attendance over a 4 week period a fixed penalty notice will be served.
- Further absences may only be authorised if evidence for the absence (e.g. a hospital appointment letter) is provided.

### **FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school at which they are registered. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Sec 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Sec 36 of The Children Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence would warrant a penalty warning. If improvement made no further action is taken. However if there is no improvement after a period of 30 sessions (15 days), and the child has any

further absence, then Penn Fields School will notify the Local Authority in writing of any child who has met any of the above criteria. The Local Authority then decides if a Penalty Notice will be served.

Penalty notices are £60 per child, per parent to be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay within this period will increase to £120 per child, per parent.

There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- The child has been absent from school for more than 10 unauthorised sessions in any term.
- Excessive holidays in term-time without prior agreement. Criteria for excessive holidays would include those listed below;
- Failure to return a child to school following fixed-term exclusion.
- General poor school attendance.
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Failure to ensure attendance at any alternative educational provision.

#### **Failure of a parent / carer to return a child from a Fixed-Term Exclusion.**

If a parent/carer is given clear notice and an appointment time for the return of their child after a fixed-term exclusion and the child then accrues at least 10 sessions of absence, a Penalty Notice may be applied for, for failing to secure regular attendance.

#### **Pupils found in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed-term or permanent exclusion**

Section 103 sub-sections 2 and 3 and Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, makes it the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children are not in a public place during the first five days of their exclusion, during school hours of a school day, including lunch and break times, without reasonable justification. Following this time, a child would either return to school or be offered alternative provision by the school or a Pupil Referral Unit. There may be reasonable justification for a parent/carer to have not ensured the pupil is not in a public place, and the circumstances of each case will be considered individually.

In the instance where a child or young person is found in public place during fixed-term or permanent exclusion, a Penalty Notice can be issued even though the absences during the exclusion may be regarded as authorised.

## **The School's Approach to Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

- At the end of every term, every child achieving 100% attendance receives a certificate and their name read out in assembly. The children also receive an additional activity/reward.
- Attendance monitoring is undertaken and recorded within My Concern. The Local Authority requires the school to monitor attendance and have regular contact with the EWO to enable school to remain on target for our end of year percentage.
- Certificates and awards are awarded for children achieving 100% attendance for the academic year.

## **Children Missing Education**

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training in later life. The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education.

The most common reasons for children missing education include the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of education provision
- Families moving into a new area

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, a judgement will be made on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

- Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate) as per the schools safeguarding procedures.

- Children of gypsy, roma and traveller (GRT) families – when a GRT student leaves the school without naming their next destination school, the school will contact the LA.
- Missing children/runaways – should the school suspect a child has gone missing/run away, the DSL will inform the police and social care.

The school will agree with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of students who are regularly absent, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care or police.