

The Priory School



Attendance Policy

Monitoring	Frame of engagement	Date
Member of Staff Responsible	Assistant Principal (Student Welfare)	May 2019
Governor Accountability	Link Governor for Pupil Related Matters	
Consultation Parameters	EWO, Attendance Clerk, Heads of Houses	
Information	Staff and Parents/Carers	
Date of latest version		May 2019
Date for next review (and cycle)		May 2022 (Every three years)
Uploaded to Website		

1. Statement of Intent

- a) The school encourages all students to achieve a full attendance record. Attendance information is provided in the student's annual reports, either where it is of concern, or where it is exceptional. Attendance data is also available upon request from parents/carers.
- b) The school makes students, parents and carers aware of the significance of good school attendance for a student's overall education and encourages all parents and carers to fulfil their responsibilities regarding their child's attendance at school as outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 and subsequent amendments.
- c) Many students at The Priory School achieve 100% attendance and the target for the school is 96% and above.
- d) Attendance of less than 95% is therefore a cause for concern and there are various levels of intervention when attendance drops below this.
- e) Attendance of 95% means one day is missed every 4 weeks of school
- f) Attendance of 93% means one day is missed every 3 weeks of school
- g) Attendance of 90% means one day is missed every 2 weeks of school
- h) By way of further example, attendance of 93%, over a five year period, means that over 60 days are lost – which is the equivalent to an entire term of work.
- i) The School believes that every day of education missed cannot be replaced and as a result will not accept parents/carers taking their children on holiday during term time. When requesting absence, see Section 7. The school follows legislation on attendance and absence during term time will only be authorised for exceptional circumstances. Where the school does authorise such absence then it is the responsibility of the student to catch up on all work missed when they return to school. The school does not set work for students to complete whilst on authorised leave unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- j) The school expects students to arrive promptly for registration and lessons and uses appropriate sanctions to minimise lateness. Parents/carers are kept informed about their child's punctuality through the school's procedures.
- k) If a student experiences a problem in attending school on a regular basis then the school will take all steps that it can to work with the family to overcome any problems. This will involve referral to the school Student Support Officer, Shropshire LA Education Welfare Officer and other external agencies which are deemed appropriate.
- l) Individual students who are considered to be vulnerable will have appropriate personalised attendance procedures in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

2. Registration

Registers are an important (legal) document and staff are obliged by their contractual duties to complete this twice a day, during morning and afternoon registration. Registers are taken promptly and accurately. Where the usual House tutor is not able to take the register then an appointed Cover Supervisor carries out this task.

Once a House tutor/Cover Supervisor has started to take the register, all students arriving after the start of the register will be marked late.

A student is marked either present or absent. If the person taking the register is not sure if a student is in school, the student is marked absent.

If a late code ('L') is used, students are assumed to be present for that session (morning or afternoon). Registration closes at 9.10 am and 2.05 pm for administration purposes. Students arriving in school after these times are considered to be absent for the entire session.

If a student arrives after the register is closed then they will be required to have a notification from a parent – this can be by email, telephone or written note.

If a House tutor/Cover Supervisor believes a student to be truanting, the Head of House and Reception must be informed immediately. Staff are made aware of vulnerable students and will report their absence to reception immediately.

Failure to complete a register is serious, since a register provides an accurate record of student attendance, and leaves the school vulnerable to truancy and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation or lockdown has to take place. If a register cannot be taken electronically then the emergency register stored in the staff room is completed and sent to Reception no later than 8.45am following morning registration, and 2.05pm following afternoon registration.

3. Role of the House Tutor

The role of the House tutor is of vital importance in the pastoral care of children. As they are in regular contact with each child, they should be the first to notice if there is variance in the child's attendance. The register may show when some change is occurring; therefore it is important that registers show accurate information concerning absences so that instant checks can be made when necessary. If the House tutor is suspicious of some irregularity or if a note does not appear, the Head of House is informed. This information should be passed on immediately if the House tutor/Cover supervisor believes a student could be at risk. If a registration is being covered by a supply teacher then the school Attendance Officer should pass on this information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately if they believe a student could be at risk.

Tutors should, in the first instance, liaise with the Attendance Officer in relation to letters home concerning late or poor attendance and the Head of House should be informed.

4. Role of the Head of House

The Head of House supports the House tutor in promoting full attendance and responds quickly to concerns raised by the House tutor regarding irregular or low attendance. They should ensure parents are contacted if attendance levels fall below 96%, for no obvious reason. The Head of House and Assistant Principal meet with the EWO regularly to analyse relevant attendance data and to ensure students who are failing to attend school regularly are dealt with promptly and effectively. They ensure school rewards and sanctions relating to attendance are implemented consistently.

5. Absence from Lessons

If a student needs to leave a class the Teacher/Cover Supervisor issues a green lesson release slip. This should be taken from the student upon their return to the class and stored in case they are needed for future reference. One slip may be issued for a group of students leaving the classroom if they are to remain together. All students out of classes during form time and lessons are challenged by staff.

If a student has been asked to attend an internal appointment/meeting (e.g. Shropshire Youth IAG, Student Support Officer, Planning Meeting, School Parliament, Interview Panel), they are issued with a permission slip from the person arranging the meeting, which they must show to the Teacher/Cover Supervisor before leaving the class. The slip is signed by the Teacher/Cover Supervisor before the student leaves the room and should be returned to Reception by the student following the meeting. In some cases, permission will have been emailed to the Teacher/Cover Supervisor in advance and a slip will therefore not be required.

Any member of staff taking students out of lessons for events or trips during the school day posts the names of those involved on the staffroom notice board at least five days in advance in addition to informing Reception when they leave the school.

Parents/carers must make every effort to organise appointments for outside of the school day. If an appointment cannot be made outside of school hours then the student must be returned to school as soon as possible after the appointment.

If a student has a medical/dental or other external appointment they need an appointment slip or letter from a parent/carer giving them consent to leave the school. This letter is signed by the House tutor and also by the Teacher/Cover Supervisor as they leave the class and handed into Reception as the student signs out and leaves the premises.

All students must sign out and back in at Reception when leaving for individual purposes. When a teacher takes a group out they will complete an attendance list on the day.

6. Absence from School

Parents/Carers must contact the school on the first day of absence (and subsequent days of absence). The Attendance Officer will input the appropriate code and reason for absence once the parent/carer has either telephoned, emailed or written to inform the school of the absence. House tutors/Heads of House will be informed via email by the Attendance Officer if the reason for absence is serious. If, on the second day of absence there has been no notification from the parents/carers then the Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers.

If the reason for absence is not confirmed in writing, by telephone or email within two weeks of an absence then the Attendance Officer will generate a letter for the House tutor to sign requesting a letter from the parents/carers. If there is no response to this letter, the absence will be unauthorised and details of the absence will be passed to the EWO who will act accordingly. The Attendance Officer will, on a regular basis, also verify the authenticity of a sample of emails.

If, on the first day of absence, there are child protection concerns relating to safeguarding, then Reception will contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a phone call home will be made. If there is no response from home by the end of the first morning or no contact has been made then the Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with appropriate agencies, such as the Initial Contact Team at the Local Authority, the EWO or the police. A home visit may be conducted in such circumstances.

It is understood that students do forget to bring in notes or are late in bringing in notes. Parents/carers are also sometimes late in reporting an absence to the school. Nevertheless, the vast majority of unauthorised absences can be accounted for when chased up by the House tutor – this can be confirmed by telephone, email or letter and is done promptly to ensure accurate records.

When a note is received that specifies the reason for absence, the House tutor should sign and date it, add the student's name and form and keep the note in the plastic folder provided. Medical room slips should also be stored in this folder. These should be stored in a secure place as the information shared is confidential. These should be handed to reception at the end of each half term period for filing. If a House tutor is concerned regarding the reason for any absence, then the Head of House should be informed.

All reasons for absence must be coded accurately. House tutors have been provided with a list of codes to which they must refer when necessary.

If the House tutor knows in advance that a student is going to be absent and the reason for absence, this can be logged in advance on the register in SIMS.

M must only be used for Hospital admissions; dental, optician or hospital, etc. appointment.

C should be used for other authorised circumstances; for bereavement, family reasons etc., authorised by parents.

I for illness other than medical or dental appointment

7. Requests for absence during term time

Requests for absence during term time can only be taken in exceptional circumstances and with written permission in advance from the Principal; otherwise it is considered as unauthorised absence. Parents/carers should request leave for a child at least ten school days in advance. This should be done using the form entitled “Request for absence in exceptional circumstances” and is available at the school Reception or on our website. The Principal, in discussion with the Head of House, Assistant Principal (Student Welfare) and Educational Welfare Officer, will then consider the request and complete and sign the request form accordingly. If the school decides not to authorise a request for leave, the request and the response from the school will be forwarded to the EWO for information and then appropriate action if the student takes unauthorised leave.

8. EWO

The Education Welfare Officer enforces the law regarding school attendance. (S)He meets regularly with the Heads of House, the Assistant Principal and the Principal to monitor all students’ whose attendance is less than 93%. **If a house tutor has any suspicions or concerns regarding a student’s attendance, (s)he is required to inform the Head of House who liaises with the EWO.**

9. Extreme Cases

Planning meetings will be held to address poor attendance if attendance drops below 85%. The Assistant Principal, Head of House, House Tutor, Student Support Officer and the EWO will work jointly to support poor/non-attenders. A Personalised Learning Plan may be implemented which will be submitted to the Local Authority and reviewed regularly.

10. Rewards and Sanctions

Students who are late to registration more than once in any week may be detained by the Head of House after school for 30 minutes. If this happens more than three times in any term a school detention is given.

Student failing to register or sign the late book are given a warning by the Head of House and required to sign the late book the first time it occurs, issued with a pastoral detention the second time it occurs and given a school detention if it happens a third time, within a school term.

Students truanting either internally or externally will be given an appropriate sanction, which may be a detention, loss of social time or an internal exclusion. Students may be placed on report if there are ongoing concerns about truancy.

