

## Attendance Policy

Policy Code:	SW12
Policy Start Date:	September 2022
Policy Review Date:	September 2023

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- HS2 Medical Treatment Policy
- HR6 Data Protection Policy
- SW5 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SW4 Pupil Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- TL6 SEND Policy

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## **1 Policy Statement**

- 1.1 The mission of The Priory Federation of Academies Trust (The Trust) is to improve the life chances of our pupils so that they become true citizens of the world, and to encourage the expectations of behaviour and personal conduct that are expressed within The Trust's Contract. For The Trust to achieve this, it is vital that our pupils attend regularly and on time.
- 1.2 The Trust supports the principles enshrined in Articles 28 (right to education) and 29 (goals of education) of Unicef's Rights of the Child Charter. The Trust endorses the position that: "Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment."
- 1.2 References to the Trust or Academy within this policy specifically include all primary, secondary and special academies within the Trust, as well as the Early Years setting at the Priory Witham Academy, Priory Apprenticeships and Lincolnshire SCITT.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- 1.4 This policy has been written in line with the DfE guidance *Working together to improve school attendance (2022)*.

## **2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation**

- 2.1 The Education and Standards Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Head of Safeguarding.
- 2.2 Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.
- 2.3 Parents/carers and pupils have a responsibility to ensure they are aware of this policy and the procedures to be followed in cases of absence.

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### **3 Aims**

- 3.1 To improve pupils' achievement and life chances by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- 3.2 To promote positive and welcoming atmospheres in which pupils feel safe and valued and which encourage pupils to have a sense of their own responsibility.
- 3.3 To support pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school, which are preventing good attendance.

### **4 Definition of a parent**

- 4.1 For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:
  - All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
  - Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
  - Any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

### **5 The law on school attendance and the right to a full-time education**

- 5.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
- 5.2 Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- 5.3 This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

### **6 Working together to improve attendance**

- 6.1 Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires our academies and

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local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

1. **Expect** – Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the academies.
2. **Monitor** – Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
3. **Listen and understand** – When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents and listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
4. **Facilitate support** – Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome barriers outside of school. This might include early help where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
5. **Formalise support** – Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending upon the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.
6. **Enforce** – Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## 7 Expectations of schools

7.1 In order to manage and improve attendance effectively, the DfE has identified the following key expectations of schools:

1. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
2. Have a clear school attendance policy, which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
3. Accurately complete admissions and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
4. Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
5. Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
6. Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

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## 8 Expectations of Trustees

### 8.1 Trustees are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust's ethos and policies.
- Ensure leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance, ensuring that training on attendance is included in the Trust's continued professional development offer for all staff.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the Trust.

## 9 Expectations of Local Authorities

9.1 The Local Authority, statutory safeguarding partners and other local partners have a crucial role in supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance and ensuring all children can access the full-time education to which they are entitled.

### 9.2 As a minimum, local authorities are expected to:

- **Rigorously track local attendance data** to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Have a **School Attendance Support Team** which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):
  - **Communication and advice:** regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
  - **Targeting Support Meetings:** hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
  - **Multi-disciplinary support for families:** provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.

- **Legal intervention:** take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- Monitor and improve the **attendance of children with a social worker** through their Virtual School

## 10 Admission and attendance registers

- 10.1 All settings within the Trust will have an admission register. All pupils, regardless of their age, must be placed on the admission register and have their attendance recorded in the attendance register.
- 10.2 The admission register must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the academy, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the academy, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.
- 10.3 A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.
- 10.4 Each setting must take the attendance register at the start of each morning sessions of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion the academy must record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 10.5 Registers are legal records and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance of admission register for 3 years from the date of entry. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry.

## 11 Granting leaves of absence

- 11.1 Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Academies will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
- 11.2 If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

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## **12 Analysis of attendance and absence data**

12.1 As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. Each academy will regularly analyse attendance and absence data to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and will look at historic and emerging patterns across the setting and develop strategies to address them.

12.2 To achieve this, each academy will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This will look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the setting.
- Secondary settings may look into patterns of attendance within a session to ensure all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (SEND, Safeguarding, Pupil Premium) in order to do the same.
- Identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark attendance data against local, regional and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor in the data the impact of academy-wide attendance efforts.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the Trustees.

## **13 Effective attendance improvement and management**

13.1 In line with the Trust's Maximising Values Framework, each academy will adopt a tiered approach in order to support pupils and parents with managing attendance concerns. Please see the next page for the framework that will be used by each academy for attendance improvement and management.

<b>Tier 1</b>	<p><b>Quality First Provision (Universal Support)</b>  <b>Prevention</b> of poor attendance through good whole school attendance management</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed procedures for the completion of registers are in place.</li> <li>• Daily attendance data is monitored.</li> <li>• First day calling is used in the event that a child is registered as absent from the academy and the reason is unknown.</li> <li>• Attendance data reviewed weekly via the academy’s SLT with additional monitoring where necessary.</li> <li>• Early intervention is provided by the academy where attendance is triggering a concern.</li> <li>• Academies follow agreed procedures for pupils who arrive late to the academy/lessons.</li> <li>• All academies adhere to government guidance in response to requests for term time holidays/absences.</li> <li>• Agreed procedures for promoting and incentivising good attendance.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 2</b>	<p><b>Early Intervention</b> to reduce absence before it becomes habitual</p>
	<p><b>Where the academy has further concerns about a child’s attendance the following strategies will be used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A telephone conversation with parents/carers to discuss concerns.</li> <li>• A letter home informing parents/carers of the child’s attendance figure and offering support.</li> <li>• A letter home requesting medical evidence to be provided in order for the academy to authorise the child’s absence(s).</li> <li>• A meeting with parents/carers (and the child) to discuss attendance.</li> <li>• A home visit to meet with the child and parents/carers if the child is refusing/unable to come into the academy.</li> <li>• The Attendance Officer (or other nominated member of staff) will invite parents/carers (and the child) to an Academy Attendance Panel meeting to set formal improvement targets.</li> <li>• Interventions are put into place where necessary, e.g. Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) for emotionally based school avoidance (ESBA).</li> <li>• An adult mentor will be allocated for the child.</li> <li>• Consideration of a part-time timetable (in accordance with a PSP only).</li> <li>• Attendance Officers or other staff with responsibility for managing attendance will attend LA Briefings and training events.</li> </ul>



<b>Tier 3</b>	<p><b>Targeted</b> reengagement of persistently absent pupils (below 90%)</p>
	<p><b>Where concerns continue, the academy will access support from external agencies, including an Education Welfare Officer. The academy, with the support of the external agency, will consider the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring.</li> <li>• 1-2-1 tuition or out-of-hours learning.</li> <li>• Voluntary early help assessment.</li> <li>• Referring the case to the Local Authority for consideration of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).</li> <li>• Continuing the PSP, with use of additional funding to access support, e.g. Art Therapy/Additional Counselling.</li> <li>• Accessing support from Pupil Reintegration Team with PSP if necessary.</li> <li>• Making a referral to the Pupil Not Attending Regularly Team (PNAR) at the Local Authority (LA) – in line with the directed timeframe.</li> <li>• Making a referral to the Child Missing Education Team (CME) at the Local Authority - in line with the directed timeframe.</li> <li>• College placements.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 4</b>	<p><b>Targeted</b> reengagement of severely absent pupils (50% or below)</p>
	<p><b>The academy, with the support of an external agency, will consider the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) by LA.</li> <li>• Parenting contract.</li> <li>• Parenting order.</li> <li>• Attendance prosecution.</li> <li>• Referring the case to the LA for consideration of implementing an Education Supervision Order (ESO) with the child.</li> <li>• Referring to specialist Alternative Provision, e.g. Pilgrim, Medical Needs Referral (Leicestershire).</li> <li>• Statutory children’s social care referral where there are safeguarding concerns (particularly when attendance becomes severe – below 50%).</li> </ul>

*Please be aware that depending upon availability, and the needs of the individual, the support strategies offered may differ from above.*

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## **14 Children who cannot attend school because of health needs**

- 14.1 Wherever necessary, the Trust will follow the guidance set out in the DfE's *Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs*.
- 14.2 Where it becomes apparent that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving suitable education due to illness, the academy will work with the Local Authority to arrange suitable full-time education. Depending upon the child's needs, this may be Alternative Provision or a Hospital School.
- 14.3 In line with DfE guidance, the academy will look to make a referral to the Local Authority if it is clear that the child will be away from school, due to illness, for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. Any referral would need to be supported by medical evidence provided by medical professionals.
- 14.4 The academy will work collaboratively with the Local Authority, the child, parents/carers and other professionals, e.g. NHS, GPs, CAMHS, to ensure that effective education is in place for children with additional health needs. The academy will also liaise closely with the organisation providing education to the child to ensure that there is continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum.
- 14.5 When reintegration is anticipated, the academy will work with the Local Authority and the education provider to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school. Each reintegration plan is likely to be individualised to meet the needs of the child in question to ensure that the reintegration is successful.
- 14.6 In the event that a child is being educated outside school when approaching public examinations, the academy will work with the education provider and the Local Authority to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for that child.

## **15 Part-time timetables**

- 15.1 All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a reintegration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

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15.2 A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

15.3 Any academy wishing to place a pupil on a part-time timetable must complete the Trust paperwork for this.

## **16 Persistent and severe absence**

16.1 Pupils are deemed to be persistently absent where they miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year). Where this occurs, each academy will work with the Local Authority to put in place additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.

16.2 Pupils are deemed to be severely absent where they are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). Where this occurs, a concerted effort is needed across all relevant services to prioritise them.

16.3 Where severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, despite support facilitated by the academy, Local Authority and other partners, the academy's safeguarding team may consider a statutory children's social care referral.

## **17 Attendance legal intervention**

17.1 Where support offered by each academy, the Local Authority and other partners is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

17.2 Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

17.3 The DfE expects schools, Trusts and local authorities to work together to make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. These include:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

17.4 Schools and local authorities should decide which parent(s) to involve in attendance legal intervention, but generally this should be all parents who have day to day responsibility for the child.

17.5 Where a pupil attends school in one Local Authority and lives in another, the Local Authority for the area where the child attends school should normally take the lead in any action to improve attendance

## **18 Training**

18.1 Training on attendance will be provided to all staff, with level and content varied depending upon need/job role.

18.2 As a minimum, all staff will have training that includes:

- The importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.
- The law and requirements of schools, including the keeping of registers.
- The strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.
- The processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

18.3 For staff who have a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders, training will also include:

- The necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data.
- Any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

## **19 Policy change**

19.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by The Priory Federation of Academies Trust.

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## **The Priory Federation of Academies Attendance Policy**

This Policy has been approved by the Education and Standards Committee:

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.

**Appendix A – A copy of this form is available from the academy reception**

<b>Request for a leave of absence</b>				
<p>In line with the Trust's SW12 Attendance Policy, only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.</p> <p>Please complete this form and submit it to reception at your child's academy.</p>				
<b>Academy:</b>				
<b>Name of child(ren):</b>				
<b>Class:</b>				
<b>Dates (inclusive):</b>	<b>From:</b>		<b>To:</b>	
<p><b>Please state the reasons for the request:</b></p> <p><i>You may submit a covering letter.</i></p>				
<b>Name of parent(s) submitting request:</b>				
<b>Signature:</b>				
<b>For academy use:</b>				
<b>Current attendance:</b>				
<b>Authorised:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Unauthorised:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Date parent(s) informed / letter sent:</b>				