



## **PRISM Independent School**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Purpose**

PRISM Independent School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all students are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. Under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are registered.

PRISM Independent School is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. An absence will only be authorised if the school is satisfied that the explanation offered is valid.

This document gives guidance to all staff on the subject of attendance and punctuality in school.

#### **Aims and Principles of Good Attendance**

- The school is committed to maximising the achievement of all students.
- There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if students are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities which are offered to them within the school.
- Parents/Carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging students to reach good attendance levels.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- School will take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance.
- A lack of attendance of attendance is considered to be a safeguarding concern.
- The school will investigate obstacles to attendance.
- The school will have re-entry strategies to reintegrate a young person after a prolonged period of absence.

#### **What the school expects of its students:**

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day.

- To hand any letters regarding absence from parents/carers to class teacher.
- For school attendance to be a priority.

**What the school expects of parents / carers:**

- To fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time.
- To ensure that they contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend before 10am.
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day
- To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- To inform the school and seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments and where possible arrange appointments outside of the school day.
- To ensure the continuity of their child's education by taking holidays during the school holiday period except for in exceptional circumstances.
- To produce documentation supporting appointments and absences.
- To be responsible for travel arrangements to and from school.

**What parents / carers and students can expect of the school:**

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- First day contact with parents / carers when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Prompt action on any problems notified.
- Notification to parents / carers of their child's attendance record through a termly report home.
- Pursuit of reasons for persistent absence.

In addition, the Head Teacher reports termly to governors regarding whole school attendance.

Attendance monitoring is part of safeguarding procedures in school and is a whole school accountability.

**Use of registers****Morning Registration**

Registers are completed by staff on pupil's entrance to the building.

Registers remain open until 9.30am. After that a pupil will be marked as late.

Examples of valid explanations for lateness may include:

- Problems with transport provided by the local education authority
- Genuine illness

"Getting up late" is not a valid explanation.

Any pupil who is not present by 9.30am must be recorded as absent, no reason yet provided (N).

### Afternoon Registration

Afternoon registration takes place at 1:00pm at the start of the afternoon session.

Registers are legal documents and should never be marked by pupils.

Once the register is closed, late pupils will be recorded as 'u' unless a relevant reason is given.

### **Procedures for following up absence:**

- Absence maybe initially authorised by a telephone call to the school.
- If pupils are absent and parents / carers have not contacted school staff will attempt to make contact by telephone. If initial attempt is unsuccessful then repeated attempts will be made throughout the morning.
- Where contact cannot be made to vulnerable pupils a home visit will be carried out to check welfare.
- **A home visit will be made on day 3 for pupils who are not considered to be vulnerable.**
- For children who are suspected to be "Missing in Education" we follow the "LSCB Children Missing in Education" guidelines
- Persistent absence will result in the local authority being notified..

### **Absence should be authorised if:**

- the pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupils' parents belong.
- the pupil's transport to and from school has not arrived/been delayed
- the pupil is the child of traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- the pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has given leave of absence.
- the pupil is attending an interview with either a prospective employer or in connection with an application for a place at an institute of further or higher education or for a place at another school.
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. a family wedding of immediate family members). In authorising such absences, the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered (immediate family is a parent or grandparent). In such circumstances up to one day will be authorised.
- No family holiday can be granted during term time
- A positive case of covid occurs in the household.

### **Absence should be unauthorised if:**

- no explanation is forthcoming from parents/carers
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house or look after siblings.

- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions, e.g. the pupil's birthday.
- if a pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that permitted by the LA or which has not been taken in accordance with the attendance guidelines/head teachers authorisation
- The pupil arrives too late to get the mark.
- In the event of truancy.

### **Amendments to school attendance regulations (2013)**

In light of new Government guidelines, the following changes have been made as to how school monitors its attendance figures:

### **The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007**

Prior to the changes – if a parent/carer was awarded a penalty notice due to their child's attendance they would receive a £60 fine and allowed to pay it in 28 days, or £120 fine if they pay within 42 days.

As from Sept 1st 2013, a fine of £60 can be given which will rise to £120 if it is not paid within 21 days, parent/carers may be prosecuted if the fine is not paid after 28 days.

### **Trips out of school and work experience**

Educational activities (including work experience (W), educational visits (V), link courses (B) or sporting activities) are deemed to be 'educated off site', and they are therefore recorded as in attendance but marked accordingly.

### **Rewarding, promoting and monitoring attendance**

PRISM Independent School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, so they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken. Early intervention often prevents more frequent absences.

A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks and success criteria are matched to pupil's needs.

Parents are reminded regularly of the importance of good attendance.

Good attendance will be praised appropriately:

A termly reward system sees young people with green attendance (95%-100%) receive a £15 gift card, amber (80%-94%) receive a £10 gift card and red attenders will receive a chocolate reward.

Attendance is a standing item on SLT and the Management Committee meeting.

PRISM Independent School has a robust Safeguarding process in place, especially where attendance is concerned. Specific outcomes linked to attendance are incorporated into the individuals' Early Help plan, where attendance is deemed to be an issue.

## Sanctions

### Truancy

If a pupil absconds their parents should be notified by telephone ASAP. Police are to be informed regarding the running pupil and their vulnerability.

A parent (where possible) must escort the child back to school and they should be sent back to class. School staff will deal with the issue; they will try to ascertain the underlying reason for the action so as to prevent it from reoccurring.

Example causes may be:

- poor relationship between a member of staff and pupil
- in response to bullying or poor peer relationships
- in response to anxiety about work

If a child refuses to return to school and does not go home, then the police are informed.

Staff will monitor the pupil if they are in the near vicinity, but if they move further afield, the police /parents/ social workers/ carers are informed.

Staff will work with the agencies involved to keep parents informed of up to date information, under safeguarding.

Staff will not follow the child / run after them (unless they have a CSE risk assessment in place) in the interim as this can only escalate the situation.

## Register codes

For reference, the following marks may appear in the register.

/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Educated off site (not Dual registered)
C	Other exceptional circumstances (bereavement, agreed special occasions)
D	Dual Registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (where permission is not granted)
H	Family Holiday (for which permission has been granted i.e. pre-authorised)
I	Illness
J	Attending Interview, e.g. with prospective employer or for college placement
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Confirmed illness/Medical and dental appointments/sickness
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances/truancy
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day of religious observance for the religious body to which parents belong
S	Approved study leave

T	Traveller – child travelling
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit
W	Work Experience
X	Covid related absence

### **Evaluation**

Attendance is discussed weekly during the SLT meeting.

Attendance will be analysed by SMT. If trends are identified appropriate action will be taken.

The policy will be reviewed annually

### **Covid 19 Addendum**

Any young person displaying covid 19 symptoms such as a high temperature or a new continuous cough must stay home and get a covid test. This absence will be marked with X until the results come back. All positive cases must be reported to the school as soon as possible and proof of a positive result will be required in order to authorise absence.

A positive result means a young person will be required to stay at home for 10 days from the day the symptoms first appeared.

If there is suspected covid in the household young people must stay still attend school unless they become unwell, they will then be instructed to complete a PCR test and results are received.

This will be marked with code X on the register.

If a positive case occurs within the school we will follow the government guidelines to determine how to minimise the risk to others.