

Pegswood Primary School



Attendance Policy March 2022

Created by: National Education Group & A Waterfield Date: March 2022

Approved by Governors: 

Date: 10/3/2022

Headteacher: 

Date: 10/3/22

Review Date: March 2025

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Attendance and Truancy

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

We believe this policy relates to the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities (GOV.UK)
- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)
- School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police (DfE)
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. We understand that there is a major school crisis regarding pupils suffering from school-anxiety problems leading to persistent and debilitating absence from school.

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We are aware that children with school anxiety may experience physical symptoms such as:

- stomach pain;
- nausea and headaches before school or have immobilising anxiety;
- panic attacks or something that seems like a tantrum.

In some cases children may even threaten to harm themselves if parents make them go to school.

We acknowledge that school anxiety and the mental health of children has been a major issue for many years but since the pandemic this has become even more serious as the numbers of children suffering school-anxiety and mental health problems has risen considerably.

We believe that we must support and work with parents of children who are suffering from school-anxiety by:

- acknowledging that school-anxiety is a problem and needs to be addressed;
- not adopting a strict approach to attendance;
- adopting a flexible and child-led approach;
- agreeing with parents a plan for attendance;
- organising a temporary part-time timetable;
- the headteacher using discretion to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

Also, we give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

We have a duty to monitor pupils' attendance through daily registration and will address all poor or irregular attendance by contacting and discussing the situation with parents.

We will inform the local authority of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed ten days or more without permission. The local authority must have in place 'robust procedures and policies' to enable them to meet their duty in relation to CME.

We ensure school personnel, pupils and parents/guardians understand that pupil absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk.

We will make contact with parents if the school has not been informed of their child's absence on the first day.

For all pupils we aim to have in place at least three emergency contact phone numbers for different adults associated with each pupil.

We have a duty to ensure that all parents are aware of our 'legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders or penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in

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school.' Parents have a duty to ensure their children are well behaved and attend school regularly as 'good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects'.

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for pupils and their families in order promote good pupil attendance and to reduce truancy.

We are aware that leave of absence can only be granted to a pupil only in exceptional circumstances and in authorising a holiday in term time we will take into account the child's attendance record, the child's age, the reason for the trip, the time in the academic year and the employment difficulties that parents face by taking holidays in school holiday time.

We will exercise a consistent approach and ensure equity for all pupils.

We are aware that the Brexit transition period ended on 31 December 2020 and, therefore, UK organisations that process personal data must now comply with the:

- DPA (Data Protection Act) 2018 and UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) if they process only domestic personal data;
- DPA 2018 and UK GDPR, and the EU GDPR if they process domestic personal data and offer goods and services to, or monitor the behaviour of, EU residents.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates in to all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To offer a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by all stakeholders.
- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To ensure the safeguarding of pupils by establishing the whereabouts of all absent pupils by making contact with parents if the school has not been informed of their child's absence.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

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Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body:

- has delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- promotes the importance of attendance and punctuality with all stakeholders;
- ensures compliance with all statutory pupil registration regulations;
- ensures that the attendance policy is carried out;
- sets statutory attendance targets for the year that are realistic and challenging in order to raise school attendance;
- asks questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- monitors termly progress towards these targets by considering the following questions:
 - ☐ Has attendance improved?
 - ☐ Has punctuality improved?
 - ☐ Has parental response to absences improved?
- ensures the Headteacher exercises his/her discretionary power to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances for up to 10 days in an academic year between September and July which may include term time holidays;
- ensures the Headteacher does not authorise absence if it is to the detriment of a child's education;
- has responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- ensures funding is in place to support this policy;
- ensures this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- has responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will initiate an effective whole school strategy for attendance by:

Leadership and Management

- having a clear vision and high expectations for attendance which is communicated to and understood by school personnel, pupils and parents;
- ensuring all stakeholders understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk;
- ensuring all stakeholders understand their role in keeping pupils safe;
- expecting good attendance and punctuality from everyone and ensuring pupils understand its importance;
- making clear that absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes;
- empowering school personnel to take responsibility for attendance;
- recognising attendance as an important area for school improvement;

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- ensuring attendance is resourced appropriately in order to create, build and maintain systems and performance;
- ensuring governors have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in ways to improve it when appropriate;
- providing leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- providing guidance, support and training to all school personnel especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups

Relationships and Communication

- creating a welcoming and positive culture across the school;
- building respectful relationships with all stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement;
- communicating openly and honestly with school personnel and parents about what is expected of them in regard to school life and school performance;
- liaising with external agencies working with pupils and parents to improve attendance;
- expecting school personnel to:
 - ☐ treat pupils with dignity and respect
 - ☐ take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
 - ☐ understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff
 - ☐ communicate effectively with families regarding pupils attendance and wellbeing

Systems and Data

- using clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and address absences
- ensuring these systems are inclusive and appropriate to all pupils
- ensuring all school personnel know and understand their responsibilities for attendance;
- having in place robust systems to provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level in order to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst such as:
 - ☐ children who have a social worker including looked-after children
 - ☐ children who are eligible for free school meals
 - ☐ children who speak English as a second language
 - ☐ children who have special educational needs and disabilities
- monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues;
- providing regular reports to school personnel to enable them to track attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures;
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Intervention

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- delivering intervention in a targeted way in response to data or intelligence;
- monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence;
- using staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance;
- creating action plans in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families;
- commissioning or delivering interventions to improve attendance;
- monitoring the intervention, making adjustments if necessary and using findings to inform future strategy;
- identifying the reasons where interventions fail to address attendance issues and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention accordingly;
- following local authority codes of conduct, policies and procedures;
- making referrals for statutory intervention when interventions have not resulted in improved attendance and relevant triggers/threshold are met

Pupils at Risk of Persistent Absence

- establishing procedures to deal with pupils who may be at risk of persistent absence such as:
 - ☐ sending letters to parents and carers
 - ☐ having a weekly tutor review
 - ☐ creating attendance clinics
 - ☐ engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations
 - ☐ using fixed penalty notices
 - ☐ engaging with children's social care staff

Persistently Absent Pupils

- establishing clear and effective service level agreements with external partners to support pupils with persistent absence namely:
 - ☐ local authority education welfare and attendance services
 - ☐ independent attendance organisations
 - ☐ alternative providers
 - ☐ youth services
 - ☐ social nursing and mental health professionals
 - ☐ children's social care staff where appropriate
- establishing good relationships with:
 - ☐ mental health charities
 - ☐ mentoring organisations
 - ☐ young carers association

Policy Effectiveness

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- monitoring the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - ☐ monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data
 - ☐ achieving results above the national average
 - ☐ looking at results from parent, pupil and school personnel questionnaires

Role of the Office Manager or School Business Manager

The Office Manager or School Business Manager is responsible for:

- monitoring pupil attendance and will make contact with parents if the school has not been informed of their child's absence;
- implementing this policy with the Head;
- ensuring the following procedure is carried out each day:
 - ☐ Collect registers once registration has been completed;
 - ☐ Monitor registers;
 - ☐ Listen to absence calls and Dojo messages;
 - ☐ Read emails from parents;
 - ☐ Make a list of absence pupils without no explanation;
 - ☐ Double check the list before calling parents/carers to establish the whereabouts of absent pupils;
 - ☐ Contact parents/carers if they have not reported their child's absence by 10.00a.m;
 - ☐ If unable to make contact with parents/carers then call everyone on the contact list;
 - ☐ Leave voicemail and Dojo messages in all cases;
 - ☐ Use school intelligence to establish any information about the unexplained absence;
 - ☐ If still no contact with the parents/carers then repeat the calls;
 - ☐ Contact the key worker if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
 - ☐ Continue to contact the parents/carers throughout the day until contact is made;
 - ☐ Inform the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the situation.
 - ☐ Keep a log of all actions.
- keeping an up to date list of at least three emergency contact phone numbers for different adults associated with each pupil;
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a weekly basis with the Head;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their child's poor attendance;
- ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date

Role of School Personnel

School personnel will:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually with pupils;
- emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment;

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- consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities;
- in regard to pupils at risk of persistent absence undertake the following by:
 - ☐ welcoming pupils back following an absence and provide good catch up support to build confidence and bridge gaps;
 - ☐ meeting with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems;
 - ☐ establishing action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets;
- in regard to pupils who are persistently absent undertake the following by:
 - ☐ preparing supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return;
 - ☐ developing targeted intervention to address gaps and build pupils confidence;
 - ☐ contributing to action plans which attendance school personnel draw together where appropriate;
 - ☐ providing tailored praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- ensure registers are up to date;
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with pupils and parents;
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations

Role of Parents

Parents/carers will:

- comply with this policy;
- work as partners with the school in the education of their children;
- ensure their children of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education;
- ensure their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- inform the school on the first day of absence;
- inform the school of any changes to their contact details;
- collect their children on time
- avoid to take family holidays in term time;
- be aware that the Headteacher when considering an application for a term time holiday request will consider the:
 - ☐ time of year of the proposed trip
 - ☐ length and purpose of the holiday
 - ☐ impact on continuity of learning
 - ☐ circumstances of the family
 - ☐ overall attendance of the child
 - ☐ wishes of the parents

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- be aware that where parents fail to seek permission for time off then the absence will be treated as unauthorised;
- be aware that it is not advisable to apply for a term time holiday during the following times of the year:
 - ☐ the first six weeks of any academic year
 - ☐ during Y6 transition week
 - ☐ during Y6 SATs week
- be encouraged to take an active interest in their child's work and to take an active role in the life of the school by attending:
 - ☐ parents and open evenings
 - ☐ parent-teacher consultations
 - ☐ school concerts
 - ☐ fundraising and social events
- encourage effort and achievement;
- encourage completion of homework and return it to school;
- provide the right conditions for homework to take place;
- expect their child to hand in homework on time;
- join the school in celebrating success of their child's learning;
- supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school

Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority and External Partners will:

- monitor and interrogate local and national data, feedback from schools and intelligence from partner agencies to develop and Local Authority wide strategy to improve attendance and monitor impact;
- monitor and share relevant absence information with schools for specific groups including those with protected characteristics;
- maintain regular communication and build relationships with school leaders through local networks and forums, to share local and national data, disseminate best practice and respond to intelligence from school leaders;
- use children's services team to facilitate community strategies and initiatives;
- engage partners from virtual school, early help and social care teams to ensure that they understand attendance expectations and ensure that the vulnerable cohort they serve are supported to sustain good levels of attendance;
- work closely with local health services and school nursing teams to ensure practitioners understand attendance requirements/responsibilities and work collaboratively with them to link families into the right support;
- establish and implement robust children missing education procedures to follow up reports from school and other educational organisations within agreed timescales;
- ensure that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education;
- in regard to pupils at risk of persistent absence:

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- ☐ have a clear process for how attendance issues should be managed and escalated if unresolved, making clear to follow different steps of intervention and involving all relevant agencies
- in regard to pupils who are persistently absent will:
 - ☐ consider using the full range of Parental Responsibility Measures such as:
 - fast track
 - parenting contracts
 - parenting orders
 - education supervision orders
 - penalty notices
 - prosecution
 - ☐ use supportive measures alongside sanctions to change parental behaviour;
 - ☐ build relationships with families of persistently absent pupils and provide practical support to unblock barriers to attendance;
 - ☐ coordinate strategies and services to ensure that messages on attendance are consistent and that information is shared appropriately

(Amended from 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities' (DfE))

Role of External Agencies

Virtual School Headteachers will:

- monitor the attendance of looked-after children;
- for looked-after children ensure personal education plans identify and address any barriers to good education;
- set aspirational targets for attendance with personal education plans;
- provide training for designated teachers about their role in promoting the attendance of looked-after and previously looked-after children;
- provide advice and guidance to those services supporting previously looked-after children and their families about promoting and securing good attendance;

School nursing teams

- may provide support to help implement care plans to support the attendance of pupils with healthcare needs;
- will provide support and advice when pupils return to school such as:
 - ☐ attendance routines
 - ☐ hospital education provision
 - ☐ home tuition
 - ☐ medical needs provision

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Social workers and family support workers should:

- convey high expectations for attendance;
- make sure school attendance is prioritised within multi-agency plans;
- in line with local guidance, use children in need or other multi-agency plans to identify barriers to attendance and engage schools and services in providing early intervention support

(Amended from 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities' (DfE))

Role of Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- being aware of the school attendance and truancy policy;
- arriving at school on time but no earlier than 10 minutes before the official school opening time;
- knowing the value of good attendance;
- returning to school after a period of illness;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys

Dealing with Lateness

The office personnel monitor lateness and inform:

- the Headteacher of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

Dealing with Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant then the school will immediately inform:

- the police
- the parent/carer;

All truants will receive:

- sanctions;
- support;
- discussions with the EWO to understand the seriousness of the matter;
- a programme of monitoring and support

Raising Awareness of this Policy

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We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- School website;
- Staff Handbook;
- Meetings with parents
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters;
- Annual report to parents;
- Headteacher's reports to the Governing Body

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
 - ☐ the importance of good attendance and punctuality
 - ☐ all aspects of this policy
 - ☐ the use and understanding of attendance codes
 - ☐ authorised and unauthorised attendance
 - ☐ looking at trends and patterns
 - ☐ bullying
 - ☐ the needs of vulnerable groups
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children as the safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to everyone in this school. We work hard to create a culture of vigilance and at all times we will ensure what is best in the interests of all children.

We believe that all children have the right to be safe in our society. We recognise that we have a duty to ensure arrangements are in place for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by creating a positive school atmosphere through our teaching and learning, pastoral support and care for both pupils and school personnel, training for school personnel and with working with parents. We teach all our children about safeguarding.

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We work hard to ensure that everyone keeps careful watch throughout the school and in everything we do for possible dangers or difficulties. We want all children to feel safe at all times. We want to hear their views of how we can improve all aspects of safeguarding and from the evidence gained we put into place all necessary improvements.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Race Disparity Audit

We acknowledge the findings of the Race Disparity Audit that clearly shows how people of different ethnicities are treated across the public services of health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

The educational section of the audit that covers: differences by region; attainment and economic disadvantage; exclusions and abuse; and destinations, has a significant importance for the strategic planning of this school.

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.

Linked Policies

- Anti-bullying
- Data Protection and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Home School Agreement
- Pupil Behaviour
- Safeguarding and Child Protection

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Document Record

Version	Reason for Amendments/Update/Review	Date of Adoption by Pegswood Primary School	Date of next review
1.0	New policy and procedure provided by Policies for Schools.	March 2019	March 2022
2.0	Changes to p2 (school anxiety) No further changes from previous copy, although now National Education Group Ltd (Taken over from Policies for School)	March 2022	March 2025