

# Pegswood Primary School



## Attendance Policy March 2019

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Approved by Governors: 

Date: 14 Mar 19

Headteacher: 

Date: 14/3/19

Review Date: March 2022

# **Pegswood Primary School**

## **Attendance**

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:

- 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)
- Data Protection: a toolkit for schools (DfE)
- Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - Information Commissioner's 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.

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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. Also, at times we have to 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 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 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 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) will entirely replace the current Data Protection Act (DPA) by making radical changes to many existing data protection rules and regulations that schools, academies and other educational establishments adhere to under the DPA. The principal aim of the GDPR is to strengthen and unify the safety and security of all data held within an organisation.

We acknowledge the new guidance given to all schools in the 'Data protection: a toolkit for schools' (DfE April 2018) regarding the appropriate use of personal data.

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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 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.

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 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.

### **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:

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- ☐ 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;
- makes effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- has nominated a link governor to:
  - ☐ visit the school regularly;
  - ☐ work closely with the Headteacher;
  - ☐ ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
  - ☐ ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
  - ☐ attend training related to this policy.
- has responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

### **Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher will:

- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the Office Manager by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- 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;
- work in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- create a culture which encourages attendance;
- address all school based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism etc;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure school personnel are fully trained in the registration process and with the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees;
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- ensure early intervention in order to prevent absenteeism or truancy and to put in to affect a range of procedures to deal with this problem;
- ensure parents are aware of their child's attendance at each parents' evening;



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- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- check all pupil emergency contact telephone numbers to ensure they are correct;
- agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- work closely with the Education Welfare Service;
- attend termly meetings with the EWO;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- expect an explanation for every absence and if one is not forthcoming then the absence will be categorised as unauthorised;
- report to the Governing Body every term attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- ensure school personnel are aware that unauthorised absence is absence without approval from the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences;
- when considering an application for 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
- apply a consistent approach across the school and ensure equity for all pupils;
- promote the importance of attendance during collective worship;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- award good attendance initiatives to pupils at the end of each half term;
- organise home tuition with the local support services for pupils with long term illness provided they are well enough to undertake the work;
- adopt procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees;
- work closely with the link governor and Office Manager;
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- monitor 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 First Day Contact Supervisor**

The Office 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;

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- 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 text 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 daily basis;
- 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;
- 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;
- be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- 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:

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- 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
- 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 may prosecute a parent for not ensuring their child attends school regularly or may issue or apply for:



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- Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Order
- Parenting Order
- School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes;
- analyse attendance patterns in order to improve pupil attendance especially those from vulnerable groups;
- make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve pupil attendance;
- try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools;
- share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities.

### **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 15 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 Trends in Attendance**

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- Parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Headteacher and EWO to explain their child's repeated absence.
- Support will be given if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement then the EWO will take the appropriate action.

### **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

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### **Absence**

**Holidays during term time** – parents are encouraged to take a family holiday not in term time. Leave of absence only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Parents are asked to complete a holiday form requesting permission to take their child on holiday.

**Religious Observance** – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for religious observance.

**Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments** – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

### **Raising Awareness of this Policy**

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- School website;
- Staff Handbook;
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;
- Headteacher 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

### **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.

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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.

### **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