The Priory Primary School
Attendance Policy

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment, which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Aims:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To interview parents/carers for the final interview.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Sandwell Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Sandwell Local Authority policies and procedures.
School Business Manager:

- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the Inclusion Officer to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To interview parents/careers for the second interview.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education and Prosecution Service and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used and reviewed for impact.
- To inform parents about attendance incentives and produce attendance leaflets at regular times of the year.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for year groups from Nursery to Year 6.
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for SLT to analyse.
- To contact parents/carers by letter, following 3 instances of lateness or absence.
- To contact parents/carers by letter: Three stages – below 95%, 93-90% and below 90%.
- To liaise with and report to outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

Inclusion Officer:

- To take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To promptly inform the SBM, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To interview parents/carers alongside the class teacher if it is the first interview.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.
- To liaise with and report to outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service alongside the SBM.
- To maintain clear communication with the Head Teacher and SBM regarding attendance and punctuality for individual pupils and year groups from Nursery to Year 6.
- To support the SBM with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
School Office:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls; when a child doesn’t arrive at school, or when no reason has been received.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of e-Portal registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To support the SBM with written communication to parents, including parent interview letters, letters of concern, improvement letters etc.
- To support the SBM to ensure pupil attendance folders are reviewed half termly.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.

Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners’ needs.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day:
  - Nursery – 8:40 am and 12:40 pm
  - Reception – 8:55 am and 12:50 pm
  - KS1 – 8:55 am and 13:05 pm
  - KS2 – 8:55 and 13:15 pm
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child’s needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the SBM and School Liaison Officer, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- To attend parents/carers interviews when requested.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school before 9:30 am. **If a child has a minor illness, for example, mild headaches, stomach aches, colds etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they do not improve, school will contact parents to collect them.** If pupils’ have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know by providing medical evidence. Pupils’ should be collected beforehand and returned to school after the appointment. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**
Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- **Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time** wherever possible.
- On the first day of absence for their child, contact the school before 9:30 am.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child’s life, which may impact on learning.
- **Do not** arrange holidays during the school time.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

**Aims:**

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) which is regularly promoted – it is high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) by rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

**Weekly Celebration Assemblies:**

- Celebration Assemblies are held every week on a Monday. Classes with the highest attendance receive £5 that is added to their graph and contributes to their class budget. Classes that obtain 100% for the week receive £10.
- Pupils are issued with a stamp book which will be signed by their class teacher each week if 100% attendance is achieved. Each week pupils will receive a small award for attending school every day. If they achieve 100% attendance for the whole of the half-term, pupils will receive an additional prize.

**School Attendance**

- Each week, each class’s attendance is updated and placed onto the school’s website. It also includes the overall attendance for the year.
- Class attendance and the total of minutes children have been late are displayed outside each class.
- Each half-term an attendance newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.
**Termly incentives**

Pupils who achieve 100% for the half-term receive a variety of different rewards. For example, Easter Egg hunts, visits and cinema experiences. The school runs additional promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

**100% Attendance**

Pupils who achieve 100% for the year are rewarded with a visit. The event is discussed and decided by the winning pupils. All pupils from Nursery to Year 6 have the opportunity to achieve this target.

**Sharing attendance data**

Pupils are informed on a weekly/daily basis of attendance achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance and the number of pupils achieving 100% attendance are shared in termly assemblies. **This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.**

**The School Learning Environment**

A welcoming, organised learning environment that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by SLT, to ensure this.

**Staff Promoting Good Attendance**

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

**Parent/teacher consultation evenings**

This provides an opportunity for teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance.

**Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or any other unavoidable cause.
Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

BOTH AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED LEAVE AFFECTS PUPILS ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the pupil. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. We strongly advise you to make an appointment to see your child’s teacher to discuss the matter.

Children who have 10 unauthorised absences over a 4-week period will be referred to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer.

Holidays in Term Time:

In line with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council guidelines, all annual leave requests will not be authorised. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child’s schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child’s education.

All applications for leave must be made at least two weeks in advance, on an official request form that is available from the school office or on our website. Please be aware that any period of leave taken will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

The Department of Education announced that from September 2015, the PA criteria will be 10%. This means that any student who falls below 90% attendance, equivalent to 38 or more sessions (19 days) in a full academic year, will become a persistent absence pupil and will be reported to both National and Local Government through the school census. Absence at this level will considerably damage any child’s educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects learning and progress.
All our PA pupils and their parents/carers are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer.

**Absence procedures:**

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us before 9:30 a.m. on the first day of absence
- For any prolonged absence, please keep school informed
- If your child is absent and the school is not informed by 9:30am, we will send a text. If we have not heard from you, we will contact you by telephone at 10:00 am.
- Staff may make an unauthorised visit to the family home to ascertain the reason for absence
- Speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers. The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child’s name on the first day absence sheet and this is filed in the absence folder. There must be a reason for every absence. **No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If the School Office has not been able to contact parents after 2 days or medical evidence has not been produced for those pupils whose attendance is below 93% then the absence is recorded as ‘O’ (unauthorised).**

To offer support for failing attendance, half-terminally we will:

- **A ‘notice to improve’ letter** if your child’s attendance falls below 95%
- Send you a warning letter after four weeks if your child’s attendance has not improved. This letter will request an appointment for you to come into school to discuss the decline in attendance and to offer support in its improvement. At this meeting you will be asked to complete a Parent/Carer Attendance Contract. This will also serve as a second warning that attendance is close to becoming in the persistent absence criteria
- Send you a medical evidence letter if your child’s attendance is **below 93%**. This letter will inform you that all absences will require medical evidence.
- Send you an attendance interview letter if your child’s attendance is **below 90%**. This letter will inform you that you will have to attend an appointment to discuss the attendance issues and identify any support the school can offer to help increase your child’s attendance.
- The school will also send out recognition letters where attendance has increased.

**Attendance Interviews:**

- **First interview:** This is held with the school Inclusion Officer. This requires you to discuss your child’s attendance, complete a parent contract with actions to increase attendance.
- **Second interview:** This is held with the SBM and school Inclusion Officer. This requires you to discuss your child’s attendance, complete a parent contract with actions to increase attendance.
- **Final Interview:** This is held with the Head Teacher. This requires you to discuss your child’s attendance, complete a parent contract with actions to increase attendance.

At any stage, a referral may be made to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer, which may result in prosecution.
Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers, including absence; therefore we need to have your most up to date contact numbers at all times. If you change your telephone number, please inform the school office immediately.

The Attendance and Prosecution Officer:

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Prosecution Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the Attendance and Prosecution Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

**How we manage lateness:** The school doors open at 8:45 am. Registers are marked at 8:55 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. School doors will be closed at 9:00 am and pupils arriving after this time will need to enter the school via the school office.

At the school office, you will be required to complete a punctuality form, which requires you to explain the reason your child is late. The amount of minutes late is documented on the form and you are provided with the information about school start times. The punctuality form is monitored by the school Inclusion Officer and the SBM regularly.

More than three lateness over a three week period will result in a punctuality letter being sent, inviting parents into school to discuss the concerns and plan a way forward.

At 9:30 a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be in school, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.
**Class Registers**

Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of the member of staff who has been directed to take the register for that session.

**Summary of procedures to promote good attendance/punctuality:**

The following tables show specific procedures to maintain and encourage excellent attendance at The Priory Primary School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Procedure</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Outcome / actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents ensure pupils arrive at school on time</td>
<td>Parents/ carers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents inform the school by 9.30am, if their child is absent that day</td>
<td>Parents/ carers</td>
<td>School office update registration codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils arriving late to school are registered at the School Office.</td>
<td>School office in charge of late registration</td>
<td>Absence mark amended and minutes late added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers record attendance. This is done by 8:55 am and 1:20 pm.</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text you, on the first day of absence after 9:30 am.</td>
<td>School office</td>
<td>School office update registration codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st day absence phone calls are made to inform parents of their child’s unexplained absence for that day after 10:00 am.</td>
<td>School office</td>
<td>School office update registration codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Procedure</td>
<td>By whom</td>
<td>Outcome / actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance statistics produced for each class</td>
<td>SBM/School Office</td>
<td>Displayed on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuality form reviewed</td>
<td>SBM</td>
<td>Speak to parents where appropriate. Send out lateness letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance shared in weekly assembly.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Pupils know which classes have won.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% weekly attendance recorded on award cards.</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Awards given to pupils who have achieved 100%.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Half termly / termly procedure</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Outcome / actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse attendance and punctuality data</td>
<td>SBM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies to promote attendance and share attendance incentives.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Parents made aware of the incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance letters – warning, medical and interview letters sent</td>
<td>SBM</td>
<td>Parents are made aware of their child’s attendance and parent interviews are arranged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-termly attendance newsletter sent.</td>
<td>SBM</td>
<td>Parents are informed of attendance data and targets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mr P Butcher, Head Teacher
Mr P Patel, Assistant Head Teacher
Mrs E Dickenson, School Business Manager
Mrs J Hughes, Welfare and Safeguarding Practitioner

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed in September 2019.
The Priory Primary School Attendance Policy

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance Policy for The Priory Primary School.

Child’s Name:

Class:

Date:

Signature:

How we manage lateness:

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If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us before 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence
- For any prolonged absence, please keep school informed. If your child is absent and the school is not informed by 9.30 am we will:

  - Text you, on the first day of absence. Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you following our text message. Speak to the parent face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
  - The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child’s name on the first day absence sheet and this is filed in the absence folder. There must be established a reason for every absence.
  - When requested, proof of absence must be provided.