



# Policy Document:

## Policy Statement on Attendance

**Policy Statement on Attendance**

### *Learning Together, Learning For Life.*

#### **Links to Visionary Statement**

#### **We aim to .....**

- keep children’s learning at the heart of our thoughts and actions
- provide the opportunity for all our children to achieve academic excellence within a broad and balanced curriculum
- create an ethos which nurtures creativity, self-belief, independence and a sense of respect for other
- ensure that our schools are happy, safe, supportive and secure places in which to learn
- create a stimulating learning environment
- develop strong and productive partnerships with parents and the wider school community
- have high expectations in all areas of school life
- prepare children for the future

***Agreed and Signed on behalf of the Full Governing Body.....***

***Date:.....***



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### Rationale

*Paulton Infant School is committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud. Regular attendance is a legal requirement and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. It also provides the opportunity for each pupil to develop his or her potential during their time at school. It is important that pupils have the opportunity to experience the full range of a balanced curriculum with its contribution to their daily moral, spiritual, cultural, mental and social development. Irregular attendance and lateness lead to pupils feeling out of touch with school life and falling behind with their work. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.*

### The School Aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Supporting pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance means 100% attendance unless absence through medical appointment, genuine illness, or agreed absence due to exceptional circumstances.
- Ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning
- Enabling pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school
- Making parent/carers aware of their legal requirements
- Encouraging good attendance
- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for children
- Providing a safe learning environment
- Providing a high quality education for children
- Providing a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns

### Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)



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- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **School procedures .**

#### **Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. Our attendance registers are maintained using SIMS (School Information Management System) and must be marked by a member of the teaching staff at the school

The attendance register will be taken between 8.50 and 9.00 am of each school day and again in the afternoon between 1.00 and 1.30pm. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

#### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day

#### **We expect Parents/Carers to:**

- Ensure that their child attends school every day.
- Ensure their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day between 8.40am and 8.50 am.
- Inform the school promptly either via School Gateway, by phone, in writing or in person by 9.00am on the first day of absence of any problems that occur that may keep the child away from school.
- Notify the office or class teacher in advance of dental and medical appointments. We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.
- Apply for other types of absence in term time in advance. (Please see below for information on absences that can be authorised.) An absence request form can be collected from the school office.



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### **We expect the Governing Board to:**

Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **We expect The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to:**

- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and monitor school-level absence data and report it to governors.
- Support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Only authorise absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
  - Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained above
  - Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
  - Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- Refer cases of poor school attendance to the Local Authority to request legal action
- Share attendance records with parents through the annual school report in July.

### **We expect that Class Teachers will:**

- Be responsible for keeping accurate attendance registers on SIMS.
- Inform the Headteacher of on-going concerns.
- Keep accurate records of any contacts with parents.

### **We expect that Office Staff will:**

- Follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.
- On the morning of first absence attempt to contact the child's parent or carer by telephone (or use our text service) followed by second or third contact to ensure the child's safety.
- Inform the CMEO, if a child remains absent from school for 48 hours without any communication from the parents or carers.



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- Endeavour to find out the reason for any absence so that attendance marks are not kept as 'N' for more than 2 weeks. If no reason for an absence has been established after 2 weeks it will be marked as unauthorised.
- Provide attendance statistics for monitoring purposes, including DfE requirements, pupil reports and the annual report to parents.

### **We expect that Children Missing Education Officer will:**

- Liaise with the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher) regarding concerns over student absences.
- Work with the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher) on whole school and individual attendance issues.
- Accept referred cases of pupils with poor school attendance regarding legal proceedings, from the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher).

### **Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absence may include:

- Absence through sickness, which has not been supported by a note or message from the parent, guardian or another responsible person.
- Leave of absence, which has been taken without the prior agreement of the school.
- Unexplained absence.
- Lateness.

Where holidays are taken which do not fall into the 'exceptional circumstances' category, these may be recorded on a child's attendance record as 'unauthorised absence'. They will always be followed up with a letter to indicate the process we may need to follow as a school.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

We lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day but also it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids wasted teaching time through repetition of instructions and teaching activities. Children who are late can often feel anxious at entering the classroom after all of their classmates and may be unable to concentrate. They may also miss key pieces of learning, which will cause confusion and affect their understanding of important concepts.

- Children are expected to be in school between 8.40 am and 8.50 am. The class registers are taken between 8.50am and 9.00am. Any child who is not in school when their name is called is marked absent. If the child arrives after the register is closed but before 9.15 am, a late mark 'L' is entered in the register.
- A pupil who arrives after 9.15 when the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).
- In the case of persistent lateness, a meeting with parents will be arranged.
- Office staff will investigate any unexpected absences before 10 .00am and feedback to the Head Teacher if there is no response from home or the second and third contacts and appropriate safeguarding action will be taken where necessary.

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***Paulton Infants School***

Last Updated Feb 2020

Next Review: Feb 2022



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- Office staff will note the reason given for absence or lateness in SIMS. The CMEO to be contacted if no response after 48hrs.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Attendance is monitored on a monthly basis.

If a pupil's absence causes concern we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving a Children Missing Education Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

### **Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

### **Changing School**

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform the present Headteacher as soon as possible giving details in writing of:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next.
- the address of the new school.
- the new home address, if it is known

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until child's new school has informed us that the child is now on their register. Information will then be transferred using the CTF (Common Transfer File)



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The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and within ten days of the child leaving. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Children Missing Education Service.

### **Responsibility**

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times.

Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Julie Hogan February 2020