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Version No. 2	ATTENDANCE POLICY – Performance Committee	

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This section should be completed following ratification of the Policy.

	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Committee's Approval	Simon Swaffer		September 2020
Chief Executive Officers Approval	Paul Watson		September 2020
Chair of Trust's Approval	Becky Hickford		September 2020
Recommended Review Date:	Annually – September 2021		

Ownership

Preston Hedge's Primary School is responsible for the production and maintenance of this document. It is issued by the Clerk, Catherine.gautrey@prestonhedges.org to whom any change requests or queries should be directed.

Version Control

This document is issued and maintained in accordance with Preston Hedge's Primary School procedures. Any change to the document will increase its version number. It is the responsibility of the reader to check with the Clerk that this is a currently valid copy.

Version	Date	Description of Change	Changed By
1	2008	Initial policy drawn up	Unknown
2	2010	Policy revision and update	Andy Palmer
2.1	2010	Small Amendment	Lyn Eastop
2.2	2010	Minor amendments	Lyn Eastop
3	2013	In light of changes in legislation	P Watson
SWB 1	2017	Policy update	P Watson /SWB Committee
SWB 2	2018	Policy update including September 18 update from KCSIE	LJenkins/ P Watson/ Exec team
P1	2019	Annual Review	Executive Team
2	2020	Annual Review	Executive Team & Performance Committee

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Preston Hedge's Academy Trust our aim is to make sure that all pupils attend school as fully as possible in the times regulated. We should make it clear that regular attendance and punctuality is essential for all pupils if they are to be successful. We give parents frequent updates on attendance matters and local issues that affect them. Our reports state the attendance record for each pupil, including absences and late attendances, ask for parental comments and extends and invitation to contact a named member of staff if they have any concerns.

Covid-19 Temporary Guidance

The following paragraphs reflect how we will adopt interim Government guidance as required during Covid-19.

Updated May 2019:

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, we have disapplied certain statutory provisions, so that the parent of a child of compulsory school age is not guilty of an offence on account of the child's failure to attend regularly at the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996). This means that parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend school.

We have also modified the meaning of 'pupil' (section 3 of the Education Act 1996) in the context of pupil registration (section 434 of the Education Act 1996). This means that children temporarily attending another school because of coronavirus (COVID-19) should not be registered as pupils. They should return to their own school once it reopens.

Children who attend a school on a temporary basis because of coronavirus (COVID-19) will still be pupils for all purposes other than registration.

Expectations.

Every Parent/Carer should be aware of our expectations with regard to notification when a child is absent. All pupils should be at school at the allotted time ready for registration and any absences reported as early as possible. All staff should report any absences so that follow up action can be taken by the appropriate staff.

Aims

Each school must encourage and assist all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality, reducing absence and persistent absence. It is important that teachers and parents are aware that good attendance is essential for pupils to maximise their achievement and attainment at school. Each school must act early to address attendance patterns.

We pay full and due regard to implementing "*School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities July 2019*"

Parents/Carers

All Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed in full uniform and in a fit condition to learn. If for any reason a child is prevented from attending,

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parents must notify the school on the first day of absence before registration. If the school does not receive notification of a child's absence by the end of registration, the main parent/carer will be sent a text asking them to contact the school by telephone, providing the reason for their child's absence, and giving an indication of when the child is likely to return to school.

A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been received from a parent/carer.

If any pupil's attendance is a cause for concern the parents/carers will be contacted by the Principal, another Senior Leader or the DSL. If this does not lead to an improvement in attendance, the school will refer to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIP) <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/service-finder/advice-and-support/471-educational-inclusion-partnership-team-eip> to investigate this matter.

Parents/Carers should inform the school of any changes of circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.

Parents whose first language is not English or who have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren) if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually in full school uniform. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support to rectify any problems.

School

All staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance including punctuality is the responsibility of all school staff and parents. The school will work in partnership to resolve any issues surrounding absence or lateness to improve the educational opportunities and welfare of the child. To promote positive attendance, school's across the Trust implement the following:

- Trends in absence data and punctuality are analysed by the Executive Team, the Performance Committee and the Local Governing Body. Concerns that arise are then communicated to the local school community, via newsletters and other means of school communication. This means that all parents are fully informed of the school's concerns and are aware impacting positively on the issue.
- Leaders in the Trust's schools consistently consider absence, monitoring it frequently to identify pupil's whose absence is causing concern. Where monitoring identifies a concern, the school will investigate any absenteeism promptly, liaising closely with parents. When a pupil's attendance drops below 90% for a period of one term, after December, the Principal will write to the parents asking for an improvement, which will then be monitored over the subsequent two terms. If there is a rapid decline, contact earlier than a term may be made.
- Where a pupil is persistently late regardless of time of arrival, contact is made with the parents. Where there are concerns that the absence and lateness links to a vulnerable child, leaders may make a Safeguarding referral sooner.
- When leaders in the school have taken all the necessary steps and there has not been an improvement in attendance or punctuality, the Principal may decide it is appropriate to refer the case to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIP)

The attendance of pupils in receipt of pupil premium will be monitored separately. The school will make every effort to ensure the attendance of pupil premium pupils is at least in line with non-disadvantaged pupils and at 95% as a group of pupils. Individual attendance targets for each school for all pupils, will be set by the Performance Committee annually and monitored accordingly.

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The attendance governor or Chair of Governors at each school will monitor attendance termly from December with the Principal to ensure the school is being pro-active in fulfilling its duties.

Registration

All registers will be taken at 8.55am and 1.00pm or 1.30pm then passed to the office for confirmation of absences with telephone or verbal messages from parents/carers. Where no notification is received from a parent, our Office Staff will endeavour to contact them to confirm the nature of the absence. Any concerns that the Office Staff have will be raised with the Principal, School Leaders or DSLs as appropriate. Any continuing problems with absence will be drawn to the Principal's attention to be followed up with contact of the parents/carers.

Legal framework

- This policy takes into account the Human Rights act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.
- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure that pupils of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- A pupil is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A pupil ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

(A child is of "compulsory school age" on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday. Children becoming 5 years old between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st April.

Children becoming 5 years old between 1st April and 31st August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st September

Children becoming 5 years old between 1st September and 31st December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st January).

- Under the education act 1996, The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for pupils of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was

- : present
- : absent
- : present at approved educational activity; or
- : unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- : School attendance Statutory guidance and departmental advice August 2013

Categorising absence

- Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- Parents/carers should advice the school by telephone or verbal message on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. Sometimes written confirmation will be requested.
- Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness. In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illnesses, or persistent absence.

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Other Authorised Circumstances. This relates to occasions where there is a cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances. Please see the list below:

Allowed absence in exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Principal)

- Family bereavement or close friend bereavement
- Other compassionate grounds
- Family wedding/civil partnership taking part on school day—not travelling to a wedding unless it is abroad.
- Family crisis
- Examinations off site
- Educational Opportunity – Sport & Performance
- Attendance at an event at the request of a public organisation
- Visit to a new school
- Family re-location visit

Absences not allowed under any circumstances

- Family holiday, no matter what length
- Family trips
- Leaving school early to travel to an event

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completing the 'MAT Attendance' form which can be downloaded from our school website. The Principal will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time. Please be aware that the local authority has been given jurisdiction to impose fines for unauthorised absence and schools may be asked to report unauthorised absence. For absence relating to illness of five days or more, schools may request a doctor's note to confirm the absence.

Where the family are travelling abroad – authorised or not – the school may request proof of return travel. (Within Europe when the stay exceeds five days, every time during school time travel is beyond Europe). This will need to be provided to the school promptly upon request. This is more likely if you are travelling for an extended duration. This is a measure that we apply across the Trust to keep children safe.

All requests for leave of absence must be completed on the Trust Absence form.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, the school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the pupil will lose their school place.

Religious Observance. Preston Hedge's acknowledges the multi faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. Parent/carers are requested to give notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent for such occasions.

Late arrival. Registration begins at 8.55am and 1.00pm or 1.30pm. The difference in afternoon times is aligned to the start of the afternoon session. 1.00pm for Year R and Key Stage One and 1.30pm for Key Stage Two. Any pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late unless there has been a problem with transport of which the school has been notified. The register will close at 9.00a.m. and 1.10p.m or 1.35pm pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late.

Deletions from the Register.

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed

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- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

Children Missing from Education

(taken from the Safeguarding Policy – see policy for further details)

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

Staff MUST report to the DSL, a child who is missing/ has unexplained absence swiftly and the office team are most well placed to do this if they become concerned around specific circumstances. Additionally, poor attendance, patterns of absence or persistent lateness should be discussed with the DSL to ensure that the issue is/ can be investigated.

In the event a child is missing, and further investigations do not satisfy the DSL, we will follow the procedures in place for Northamptonshire.

The Principals monitor attendance and liaises with the DSL to ensure pupils are attending school and any concerning patterns of attendance are addressed. Our office teams are key in recognising attendance patterns and there is an expectation that they pass information on swiftly.

Additionally, we -

We must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 5 school days or more. At such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

On the first day of absence, the office staff must contact the family **by 9.30am**. If there is no response, all other held contact details should be used to establish that the child is off ill (and safe). If no other channels of communication are effective, the school must conduct a home visit the same day **at lunchtime** (you must show your identity badge). **In the event that there is no response at the home address, a standard letter should be posted asking for the family to make contact with the school.** Reasonable steps may including asking neighbours if they know where a family is. staff The Trust has this policy, in part, due to tragic events seen in the news where something has happened to the parent and then, as a consequence, the child.

Where a child is deemed as "vulnerable" the same procedures are followed, however if there is still no contact after the home visit then a call is made to Northampton MASH to advise.

The Trust expects all schools to go beyond the legal minimum and take every step to hold more than one emergency contact number. KCSIE states that this is good practice as it allows a school to make contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing from education or if there is a welfare and/ or safeguarding concern.

Roles and Responsibilities.

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The Performance Committee

- To ensure that each of its schools fulfils its duties as defined in this attendance policy.
- To review the attendance figures within the Chief Executive Officers report
- To ensure that where attendance is falling in one of its schools or below the individual school, objective, that it ensures the LGB take steps to swiftly address this concern.
- Where there is an ongoing concern around attendance in a school this is fed by the Chair into the Trust Board.
- Review the Trust's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy

The Local Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents/carers
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through reporting at Governor Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or DFE as required on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior member of staff and governor to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Leadership Team and Teachers will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers
- Ensure that with good teaching and learning experiences it will encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor attendance on an attendance tracking grid. Tracking any children with under 90% attendance and all pupil premium pupils.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and review the policy is reviewed regularly
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority/DFE as required on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues to the Local Governing Body and Trust.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority/DFE and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

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Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to implement school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

All information shared will be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

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