



Attendance Policy

Priestley Smith Specialist VI School

January 2025

Policy review date: January 2026

Policy status: Statutory

Responsible member of SLT: Liz Clabon DHT

Priestley Smith School is committed to the rights of the child as outlined in the UN Convention and is working towards Rights Respecting Schools silver award. This belief influences everything the school does and impacts upon all our policies.

Article 3 The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 4 Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

Article 28 Every child has the right to an education.

Rationale

All students have the right to a high quality education. Priestley Smith School seeks to ensure the most effective education for all its pupils. In order to achieve this it is vital that pupils attend school consistently and on time. Good attendance and punctuality are important characteristics to develop for the future world of work.

The school works in close partnership with students and families to ensure the best possible attendance for each child. We monitor attendance closely. We keep students and families regularly informed on individual attendance rate, and on school and national requirements.

Good attendance can be summarised as 95-100%.

This will always be our target for all students.

Attendance below this is a cause for concern and

will prevent the student from achieving to their full potential.

The government views attendance below 90% as persistent absenteeism.

Pupils failing to attend school regularly can be a sign of deterioration in their emotional well-being or a sign of abuse and neglect. It can also be a sign that they are unhappy at school for whatever reason and we will explore and try to resolve any issues. The safeguarding of our pupils and our professional curiosity underpin our attendance monitoring systems.

Aims

1. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, staff and governors.
2. To ensure that all students and parents/carers understand the strong correlation between good attendance and high achievement.
3. To improve the overall attendance of pupils at the school and to celebrate good attendance by all.
4. As part of the school's work on developing independence, to encourage all students to take responsibility for their own attendance.
5. To provide support (including medical advice and guidance) to parents and pupils on how to maintain the best possible attendance.
6. To ensure consistent and prompt communication between home and school.
7. To implement an effective monitoring and intervention strategy, with a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
8. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence through illness.
9. To implement, when necessary, the City's Fast Track system of addressing poor attendance.

Register Codes

The following are used when categorising student attendance each day:

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Present
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Not counted in possible attendances

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved educational activity
K	LA arranged provision at a place other than a school	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Approved educational activity
C	Absent with leave (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Absent due to participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Authorised absence
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence

D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
Q	Lack of transport or boarding access arrangements arranged by LA	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Transport normally provided by LA or school not available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel due to local, national or international emergency	Not counted in possible attendances
Y3	School partially closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	Travel or attendance contrary to public health guidance or law on transmission of disease	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils (planned closure)	Not counted in possible attendances

Categorising Absence

A mark is made for each pupil during registration. Any pupil who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless the reason is already known and accepted by the school in advance or the reason is accepted as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended.

Parental Responsibility

Adults have a very significant role to play in the attendance of pupils. Good examples of attendance and timekeeping by staff and parents provide role models for pupils. Parents are informed through the initial induction process, letters and through the school website of regulations and procedures regarding timekeeping. We emphasise it is their responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance and the importance of notifying absences to school. Regular reminders are issued through regular communication.

Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school every day, unless ill or they have a medical appointment. If their child has to attend a medical appointment in the morning or afternoon, parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school before or after such an appointment and are not absent for the whole day. Almost all students at Priestley Smith have to attend medical appointments at times. These are included in government attendance statistics, but are not included in the school's own analysis of attendance data, as attendance at medical appointments is considered essential and unavoidable. Consequently a pupil who attends medical appointments may still attain a 100% attendance reward.

Parents are expected to inform school of any reason for their child's absence by 9.15 a.m. on the first day of absence. If the school has not been notified by 9.30, the school will telephone the parent to ascertain reason for absence and if contact cannot be made will contact the emergency contact number for that child. If contact can still not be made, the school may carry out a home visit that day to check that child and family are safe and well. If no response can be gained at the home address, the school may contact the police.

Contact between parents / carers and school via telephone **must** take place in order to account for absences. Copies of pupil medical appointment letters, cards and text messages should be supplied to class or form staff when notifying the school of medical or dental appointments. Alternatively, these can be emailed to enquiry@priestley.bham.sch.uk

Student Registration

Children should be in school ready to register at 8.50 a.m. each day. The register is taken twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Morning registration is between 8.50 and 9.05. Children arriving between 9.05 and 9.20 am will be considered late, unless this is because of difficulties with organised transport which is beyond their control, they will be marked as present. Where patterns of consistent late running by contractors occur, this is followed up by the school with transport providers.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Staff follow Birmingham Authority's coding system to mark the registers. The decision as to whether to authorise an absence or not lies with the school. The school will **not** authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no message has been received
- For visits or holidays
- For shopping trips
- For leisure days out
- Where pupils and families have overslept and missed transport and the family do not bring the pupil into school later.
- Where it is believed a parent is condoning an unnecessary absence, e.g. the child is kept away from school because the parent is ill
- For extended absence for religious observance beyond the days recognised by Birmingham Local Authority
- In other cases where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation e.g. Emotionally-based school avoidance

Leave of Absence

Leave of absence can only be granted by the Head Teacher in exceptional circumstances e.g. to attend a family wedding or funeral. This is for a maximum of 3 days and evidence must be provided.

Family holidays will not be approved, in line with Government Policy

School Procedures

Morning registers close at 9.20 a.m., except on days of particularly inclement weather, when the head teacher will decide on the time of closure. The office will phone the family on the first day of a student's absence by 9.30 a.m. if no reason has been received.

It is not the guides responsibility to inform school of an absence and there is an expectation that parents and carers will contact school directly, either by phone or email.

Class and form teachers carry out ongoing monitoring of both attendance and punctuality and will contact the family if there are any concerns. Staff record concerns about pupil attendance on the student's SIMS record and will keep senior staff informed of these concerns, any interventions to be carried out and the impact of such interventions. Identified members of the Senior Leadership Team analyse school attendance data regularly and pupil attendance is an agenda item on the Senior Leadership Team meeting every fortnight.

The school monitors attendance rigorously and the attendance flowchart below identifies the actions taken to safeguard our students. School Staff and Designated Safeguarding Leads follow these procedures carefully.

ATTENDANCE SAFEGUARDING AND RECORDING PROCEDURES

Staff must take pupil register by 9.05 each day, record N code on SIMS for all absence

Pupil absent, parent not phoned	N on register Reception make repeated calls, leave answer phone message and use emergency numbers	If no answer let DSL know by 10.30 who will decide action needed.
Is absent pupil CP/CIN/CiC or otherwise a cause of concern	Reception inform DSL immediately N on register Reception follow guidance from DSL and continue to make repeated calls	DSL will decide on a course of action dependent on the level of concern. This may be to contact named Social Worker or police for advice
Continued absence	If no phone call received from parents or carers, Reception make well-being phone calls each day even if cause known.	Admin to inform parents/carers that they must make daily calls to update school even when absence is understood
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DSL: actions may involve use of emergency numbers, text message, email, contacting Social Services, home visit• Admin: Record all outcomes on Attendance Safeguarding Spreadsheet		

Complex Health Issues

As a special school having students with visual, physical, social/emotional and highly complex medical disabilities, we recognise that some pupils have specific difficulties over attendance and timekeeping due to health issues. If there is a problem that would involve a student in attendance for less than the statutory time, discussions with health professionals will confirm this e.g. information through school or hospital clinics

Persistent Absence

Any pupil whose attendance is below 90% is categorized as being persistently absent. We analyse attendance data regularly and identify those who fall in this group. We discuss issues that may explain deteriorations in attendance and then we agree on suitable interventions and a time frame. The impact of these interventions is tracked to ensure improvements over time.

In some cases where school based interventions have not led to sustained improvements we may consider the Local Authority legal processes -Fast Track. Senior staff have been trained on the FastTrack process.

School Procedures to support improving Pupil Attendance

Apart from the daily safeguarding phone calls when a pupil is absent, where we spot patterns or have concerns there will be a conversation between families and the Learning Mentor to identify any Early Help support needed.

Pupil attendance is monitored weekly by SLT and guidance given to staff to support improvements. We recognise our pupils have significant health issues and have a high number of unavoidable and essential medical appointments. The figure they are given does not include authorised absences or medical appointments.

We are attempting to tackle casual school avoidance where pupils may not feel like coming in and may exaggerate not feeling well.

Where there is persistent absence or a longer absence of more than 3 days, a member of the Pastoral Team, or SLT may undertake a home visit to see how we can best support children's reintegration into school.