

# THE PRIORY SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

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## ATTENDANCE

### Commitment to Attendance

The staff of The Priory School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors, other schools and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community.

Regular attendance is key to achieving, research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. If students are persistently absent, research suggests that they underachieve by at least a whole grade each year.

As a school, we will encourage parents / carers to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems or barriers that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Every student's attendance will be analysed each week and monitored. This way early intervention can be put in if attendance needs to be improved, or a student can be awarded for having good attendance.

<b><u>Attendance</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Days absent (at end of year)</u></b>
100%	Excellent attendance	No days absence
96% - 99%	Good attendance	Up to 7 days absence in whole year
93% - 95%	Concerning attendance	Up to 13 days absence in whole year
92% - 90%	Poor attendance	Up to 18 days absence in whole year
Below 90%	Severe absence - Persistently absent from school	More than 19 days of absence which is almost 4 weeks off.

### LEGAL POSITION

Every student of compulsory school age, who is a registered student of a school, must attend the school regularly.

Students need to attend regularly if they are to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance leads to educational disadvantage. It places students at risk and in some cases it can result in students being drawn into patterns of antisocial or criminal behaviour.

There is a direct correlation between high absence and low attainment, as well as the impact this has on a pupil's future employment prospects.

Therefore, The Priory School believes that regular attendance at school is vital for its students to be successful.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular school attendance and failure to do so may mean committing an offence under sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

### *ALL STUDENTS MUST:*

- Attend school regularly,
- Attend school punctually,
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day,
- Discuss promptly with their Form Tutor, Head of Year or another member of the Pastoral Team any problems that may affect their ability to attend school regularly.
- Understand your attendance data by looking at Edulink each week.

### *ALL PARENTS / CARERS WILL:*

- Ensure students have good school attendance, aim for at least 96%, and be aware of their legal responsibilities,
- Ensure that their student arrives at school punctually (by 8:50am) and prepared for the school day,
- Contact school promptly through using Edulink, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their student away from school,
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details,
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their student.
- Use Edulink each week to monitor your student's attendance.

### *THE SCHOOL WILL:*

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere,
- Provide a safe and aspirational learning environment,
- Provide a sympathetic response to any student's or parent's concerns,
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality,
- Monitor individual student's attendance and punctuality.

## **GOOD ATTENDANCE**

- Students will be awarded a house point for each week that their attendance is above 96%.
- Certificates will be issued for 100% attendance at the end of each school term.
- Improvement certificates will be awarded to students who have shown improvement in their attendance looking at the overall percentage each half term.
- Students who have an attendance greater than 96% will get their name published in the end of term Priory Press.

## **ABSENCE**

There are a few circumstances where a student may not attend school and the absence may be authorised, namely:

- a) Sickness,
- b) With the permission of the Headteacher,
- c) To take part in a day of religious observance by the persuasion to which the parents belong.

## **SCHOOL PROCEDURE WHEN A STUDENT IS ABSENT**

The following steps will be taken when a student is absent:

1. We ask parents to use Edulink to contact the school on each day of a student's absence to explain why they are absent. Where no reason is given, parents will be contacted.
2. If the school does not hear from a parent then the parent will receive a phone call from 'absence call'. We then ask parents to contact us, to explain the absence. If no contact can be made between the school and the parent, then the school will consider calling the police so they can make a welfare call.
3. Tutors or staff specifically mentoring a student for attendance will make contact to see if any help is needed.
4. If a student's attendance falls below 96% we will consider sending a letter of concern.
5. Further absence will result in either telephone conversations or a meeting between the student and parent with either the form tutor or head of Year.
6. If there are any further absences for a student with attendance falling below 92%, a Medical Evidence letter will be sent requesting medical evidence to cover every future absence – without this the absences are unauthorised. An attendance panel will also be considered at this time.
7. Further absence will result in an attendance panel meeting between the school (SLT), student and parents.
8. If any further absence occurs, then the student and family will be referred to the Inclusion Team. The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council will try to work with parents and students to see if they can help remove any barriers to school that a student may be experiencing. If this is not possible they may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their student's unauthorised absence from school. This requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

## **ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS/MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Parents are discouraged from keeping students off school for minor ailments (we do not follow the Primary School rules of 48 hours at home following sickness or stomach bugs). Parents are encouraged to limit time off for visits to doctors or dentists as far as is reasonably practicable and to make the appointments after 1.30pm in the afternoon. Where this is unavoidable, please notify the school in advance.

Parents need to ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence and every subsequent day their student is absent by using Edulink. If this is not possible, by calling the Student Services Office (01306 878784) or emailing the absence line (studentservices@priorycofe.com).

Where a student is absent without any prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason) the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Explanations such as birthdays, weddings, minding the house and shopping trips within school hours are not acceptable reasons for absence.

## **HOLIDAYS**

**The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Where a student is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each student who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. If parents fail to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare then this will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. (Unauthorised absence includes late arrival after the close of registration (9.15am) without good reason.

## **REGISTERING STUDENTS**

Registration will take place at the start of each lesson. For AM registration the lesson one mark is used and for PM registration the lesson 4 mark is used. Staff with concerns about attendance will refer these to the Form Tutor and/or Head of Year and Student Services..

## **PUNCTUALITY**

Students should also be punctual to school and individual lessons. Period one starts at 8.55 am so all students should be on the school site by 8:50 am. Students arriving after this will be marked as late. Students who arrive after 9.15am will be marked as being late and occur an unauthorised absence. If a student is late they will receive a detention from their teacher..

Sanctions may be imposed on students who are persistently late to school or lessons. Parents will also be contacted and possibly asked to attend a meeting. Persistently late students who arrive past 9:15 am may be referred to the Inclusion Officer.

### **ILLNESS (in school)**

If a student becomes ill during the school day, they must go to the student services office and, if necessary, parents will be contacted for the student to go home. If they need to come out of a lesson to do this, they should bring a note from their teacher with them. Students must never contact parents directly to make arrangements to go home and if the correct procedures are not followed then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **TRUANCY**

If a student truants from school or leaves school without permission, this is regarded as an extremely serious matter. It may take up a great deal of staff time and it may be necessary to inform the police that a student is missing. This is a matter both of discipline and personal safety. Under no circumstances should students leave school without permission from a member of staff. Heads of Year will report every act of truancy to parents/carers and any student found truanting will be liable to school sanctions such as detentions or internal isolation where students will be required to make up the work they have missed. Twenty four hours notice will be given to parents of any detention after school.

### **PENALTY NOTICES**

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their student's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 (per parent per student) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 (per parent per student) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN A PENALTY NOTICES MAY BE ISSUED**

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or the Inclusion team will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

### **ANY CONCERNS OR SUPPORT NEEDED**

As a school we want to support every student to have good attendance. This may mean that we need to work together to remove any barriers that there may be for a student to attend school. If you have any concerns about attendance then please contact Ms H Taylor, Assistant Headteacher who is the Safeguarding Lead.

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