

Priory Academy

POLICY TITLE:	ATTENDANCE
STATUS	Statutory
REVIEWED BY:	K Davies
DATE DUE:	February 2021
DATE of APPROVAL:	July 2018
VERSION:	FINAL
DATE of REVIEW:	September 2021
LEAD RESPONSIBILITY:	Kieron Davies

AIM

The attendance policy aims to encourage students to attend school regularly to ensure they are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES

The Trust policy on Attendance should be read in conjunction with the information on Admissions, PSHE and session times, and any guidance provided by the school for staff on the registration of students.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set for individual students, classes and year groups
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised
- Students attendance and lateness are monitored regularly
- There will be appropriate liaison with relevant schools
- School attendance statistics are reported to the relevant authorities
- The Home School Attendance Officer will work with students with attendance difficulties.
- Students absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate learning support
- The Governing Body is informed of any long term absences where deemed appropriate
- When appropriate the Penalty Notice Process will be instigated for unauthorised absences (see Appendix A).

Other staff will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently
- Students' attendance and lateness is reported daily

Students will be encouraged to:

- Attend school regularly
- Inform staff if there is a problem that might lead to absences

Parents and Carers will:

- Ensure the student attends school regularly
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance (e.g. family holidays, special occasions). *NB Approval will normally only be granted, in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head teacher*

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- Relevant Authorities are informed of the long-term absence of any students
- Whole school attendance is monitored.

Lateness and punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and also to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

The school day begins at 8.25am when the school bell sounds. Morning registration is at 8.30am and it closes at 9am.

All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with the Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Every AM lateness will result in a 20 minute afterschool detention that is run on a Friday. This could mean that a child could accumulate 1h 40 minutes worth of detention time. This has been put into place to reduce lateness and to encourage parents to engage with the school when dealing with lateness. If students are late for medical reasons or parents have been proactive in communicating lateness then this sanction will be reviewed.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Punctuality at school is vital and registers should not be kept open for an extended period of time. Registers close in the morning at 9am.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness (U code) are unauthorised absences and maybe be subject to legal action (see Section 6 for further detail). Parents/carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 12 week period, the school may ask Central Bedfordshire Council to issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be evaluated biennially by the AHT lead for attendance and Headteacher

Equalities impact assessment considered

Appendix A

Local Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)

Introduction

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the police, designated Local Authority Officers and Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence (truancy) of pupils of statutory school age.

The government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to which all parties involved must adhere. Penalty notices may be issued only in accordance with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that:

- the powers are applied consistently and fairly
- duplicate notices are not issued
- issuing a notice does not conflict with proceedings proposed or being taken by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the penalty notice scheme.

The Law

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added sections 444A and 444B to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for that offence by paying a penalty. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the framework for the operation of the scheme.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions.

As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Penalty notices apply to parents of children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at maintained schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (Education Support Centres), City Technology Colleges, Studio Schools, UTCs and any other alternative education provision arranged under section 19 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents cannot be prosecuted for the offence for which the penalty notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed and the penalty remains unpaid. Parents cannot be convicted of that offence if the penalty is paid in accordance with the notice.

The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal actions arising from it.

Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The pupil must have at least **10 sessions** (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
- The school/academy/police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of **two** separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
- Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance

Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing penalty notices

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and may not be delegated. Schools, academies and the police may issue penalty notices if they wish to do so but any notices issued by them **must** comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct and a copy of any penalty notice issued must be provided to the Local Authority.

In Central Bedfordshire all parties agree that the Access and Inclusion Team administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

The Local Authority receives applications to issue penalty notices from schools, academies and the police. Penalty notices will be issued provided that:

- the circumstances of the absence meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct
- the information is provided in the specified manner
- the request is received not more than 10 school days after the final absence cited

The Local Authority retains revenue from the scheme to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Appealing against the issue of penalty notices

There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Central Bedfordshire's Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.

Effect of issuing penalty notices

If the penalty is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it the Local Authority named in the notice shall either institute proceedings against the recipient for the offence or shall withdraw the notice.

Payment of penalty notices

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, postal order and by debit/credit card is accepted.

Withdrawal of penalty notices

The Local Authority may only withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

- has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- ought not to have been issued
- ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
- has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence

Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority.

*Addendum: Department for Education's recording attendance in relation to COVID19 2020 to 2021 academic year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>