



Priestsic Primary and Nursery School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

2024-2025

POLICY REVIEW

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Priestsic Primary and Nursery School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

1. Statement of Intent

Priestsic Primary and Nursery School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High achievement and a child being able to fulfil their true potential depends on good attendance.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents/carers.

We take a whole school approach to securing good attendance, and recognising the impact of our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, SEND Support, pastoral support and the effective use of resources such Pupil Premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

All stakeholders – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this and outline how the school looks to sustain and improve school attendance.

As a school, we are committed to ensuring that all children achieve the highest level of attendance. We promote good attendance and punctuality because it has a positive effect on achievement and progress and is a necessary life skill. 97% attendance constitutes the school's expectation of regular attendance.

We are committed to:

- promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits;
- ensuring equality and fairness for all;
- ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents;
 - intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils;
- building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance;
- working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies;

- ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise;
- regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either Authorised or Unauthorised. Only school can authorise the absence - not parents or carers.

This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, either in writing or through a telephone call or an email to the school office.

Parents or carers whose children are experiencing difficulties regarding attending school should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the school in resolving any issues. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, the school will refer the family to outside agencies who will also support the child in returning to school.

We aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all children, apart from those with recognised serious health issues;
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school;
- Ensure that our policy applies to all Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age;
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and the Family Support Service;
- Provide clear guidelines for pupils and their families;
- Regularly remind parents/carers of school policy and practice;
- Raise the profile of attendance among children and their families;
- Carefully monitor attendance and feedback concerns to parents/carers

The school's Attendance Officer is Mrs Darrington who can be contacted via admin@priestsic.notts.sch.uk

The school's Family Support Worker is Amanda Cooper who can be contacted via acooper@priestsic.notts.sch.uk

Our policy applies to all children on roll in this school and is available to all parents/carers on the school website.

2. School Hours

The official start time for all children in school (F2 – Year 6) is **8.50 am** and the **official end time** for all children in school (F2-Year 6) is **3:20 p.m.** **School doors will be open in the morning at 8:45 am. This is in line with** the Government's expectation for all mainstream state-funded schools to deliver 32.5 hours per week (or 6.5 hours per day) of school time.

Nursery sessions (F1) continue to be held each morning from the times **of 8:45am – 11:45 am**. There are no afternoon Nursery sessions.

3. Legal Framework/Legislation and Guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children Missing Education'
- DfE (2022) School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- > Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- > Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- > Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- > [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- > [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- > [School census guidance](#)
- > [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- > [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

4. Roles and responsibilities

School's Responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) at Priestsic Primary and Nursery School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.

The office staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The office staff and the Attendance Officer will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with and are made available to staff, pupils, parents and governors.

The Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage through regular and ongoing monitoring and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

The school will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

Office Staff, including the Attendance Officer, will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headteacher, parents/carers and the governing body. Attendance is monitored by whole school, year group and by class group. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DFE within the stipulated time frame.

Governors Responsibilities

The governing body of Priestsic Primary and Nursery School will ensure that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Governors will be updated regularly with details on attendance, absence and the number of pupils being closely monitored. National statistics will be used to contextualise the schools' attendance data.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising [role] to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'Senior Attendance Champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher, Mrs Stamp and can be contacted via admin@priestsic.notts.sch.uk.

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- > Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- > Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- > Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- > Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Darrington and can be contacted via admin@priestsic.notts.sch.uk

Parents/Carers Responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 at those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child) who will be supported and encouraged by Priestsic Primary and Nursery School.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up to date contact details
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number
- Updating the school if their details change
- The attendance of their children at school
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children

Priestsic Primary and Nursery School expects parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child attends the school regularly
- Support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- Not expect the school to automatically agree to any requests for absence and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- Notify Priestsic Primary and Nursery School on each day absence by telephone, email or letter
- Ensure their children arrive in school on time, wearing correct uniform and with the right equipment for the day – where uniform is absent, where possible, pupils will be provided with this by school
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents meetings and consultations and taking an interest in their children's work and activities
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives

Pupils' Responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality. Pupils should attend all their lessons and any agreed activities in school on time and ready to learn.

5. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

An absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- a. where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered
 - the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend
- b. where the pupil has a medical appointment – parents/carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand. In order to gain approval for their child's absence, parents/carers will be expected to provide proof of their child's medical appointment
- c. where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
- d. the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- e. in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period** (at the Head's discretion according to circumstances).

Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

Unauthorised absence:

Absences will remain unauthorised where either no reason has been given or where the Headteacher is not satisfied that the reason given justifies the child's absence from school.

For example:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

When the percentage of attendance falls below 90%

6. Attendance Expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day that they are required to be at school for the full day.

The school day starts at 8:50am, and pupils will be in their classroom ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 8:45am. Pupils will be expected to return from their lunch break promptly to recommence learning.

Illness

The school encourages pupils to attend school unless they are too ill to attend, or have to be kept off due to contracting an infectious disease. The NHS guidelines for the length of time children should be kept off school can be found here: [NHS- Should I keep my child off school?](#)

Children should not be kept off school if they feel 'under the weather' and have mild symptoms such as tummy ache, headache or a general cough or cold.

The decision to grant an authorised absence for illness is at the school's discretion.

The school will not usually request medical evidence where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, staff may conduct a doorstep visit to ascertain whether the child is well enough to attend school.

On the fifth day of absence due to illness, or sooner if the school deems this necessary, a doorstep visit will be undertaken by two members of school staff. At least one staff member undertaking the doorstep visit will be a school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

7. Punctuality

School starts at 8.50 a.m. every day. Children who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. This means that they are often unsettled and confused about tasks. Their teacher will not always be able to re-explain work. It is also very important that children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that children need to develop whilst they are young.

Parents are expected to ensure that their child arrives at school on time. The school understands that there may be rare occasions when families are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions parents should contact the school office to inform the school of the estimated arrival time.

The school will monitor children's punctuality and attendance in line with DfE Guidance (2022). Lateness after the class register closes (9.15am) is classified as an unauthorised absence.

The teaching staff use electronic registration to register children at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

Morning

- The morning register will be open from 8.45am to 9.15am (school bell rings at 8.50am).
- A child will be marked as late if they arrive at school after 8.50 am but before 9:15 am.
- The morning register will close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after this time will receive an unauthorised absence mark in the register.
- Parents/Carers Late comers must report to the main office. Any child arriving late will need to go to the School office with their parent/carer, so that a reason for lateness can be given. This is the only way to enter the building so that school is not disrupted in any way. Please do not ask the class teacher or members of staff to open any outside doors because it is important that we keep our school safe for everyone.
- Therefore, it is the responsibility of the office staff to ensure that the registers have been altered accordingly.

Afternoon

Due to staggered lunchtime timetabling, afternoon registers are taken at different times, dependent on the pupil's year group

Foundation 2

- The afternoon register will be open from 12.15pm to 12:45 pm.
- A child will be marked as late if they arrive at school for the afternoon session between 12.20pm and 12:45pm.
- The afternoon register will close at 12:45 pm. Pupils arriving after this time will receive an unauthorised absence mark in the register.

Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2)

- The afternoon register will be open from 12.45pm to 1.15pm.
- A child will be marked as late if they arrive at school for the afternoon session between 12.50pm and 1.15pm.
- The afternoon register will close at 1:15pm. Pupils arriving after this time will receive an unauthorised absence mark in the register.

Lower Key Stage 1 (Year 3 and Year 4)

- The afternoon register will be open from 1:00pm to 1.30 pm.
- A child will be marked as late if they arrive at school for the afternoon session between 1:05pm and 1.30pm.
- The afternoon register will close at 1:30pm. Pupils arriving after this time will receive an unauthorised absence mark in the register.

Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 5 and Year 6)

- The afternoon register will be open from 1:30pm to 2:00pm.
- A child will be marked as late if they arrive at school for the afternoon session between 1:35 pm and 2:00pm.
- The afternoon register will close at 2:00pm. Pupils arriving after this time will receive an unauthorised absence mark in the register.

Pupils and parents are encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Early Collections from School

To ensure that learning time is not interrupted we ask parents/carers to NOT collect their child/children early from the school office (ie between 2:45pm and 3:20pm) unless in exceptional circumstances/pre-agreed alternative collection arrangements.

Please try to make any medical appointments for your child outside of school time where possible. Taking your child out of school early (before the end of the school day at 3:20 pm) is losing valuable learning time for your child. **Please try to avoid this.**

8. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil outcomes. Priestsic Primary and Nursery School is committed to supporting parents and pupils in sustaining and improving attendance, and the following measures are used to ensure policy and procedure can be applied fairly and consistently:

- Having in place an Attendance and Punctuality Policy that staff, pupils and parent/carers are familiar with.
- Promotion of the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers;
 - Following the Pupil Registration Regulations, particularly for accurate, up to date and correct usage of coding;
- Robust systems for monitoring attendance and data to analyse absence patterns
 - Setting of trigger point/thresholds (pathway);
- Early intervention and a clear understanding of who does what and when (pathway);
 - Clear and timely communication with parent/carers concerns and expectations about attendance by: Phone calls, letters, meetings in school or other venues and home visits (all of which are documented);
- Identifying the causes for absence from pupils and parents/carers point of view.
- Setting realistic targets and plans to support improved attendance;
- Supporting the most vulnerable pupils by: referral/signposting to other agencies, encouraging the return of pupils with catch up opportunities and reintegration plans;
 - Recording all actions in Attendance Case Files/chronologies.
- Sending formal letters to parent/carers.

The following documents and activities stress the importance of good attendance and punctuality:

- Home/School Agreement
- Newsletters
- Information for new parents/carers
- Specific leaflets relating to attendance
- Weekly school assemblies
- A system of rewards
- End of year pupil reports

The school has adopted the following attendance target and special initiatives in order to promote good attendance:

- 97% whole school target
- Weekly Celebration Assemblies where class attendance is recognised and rewarded
- Class attendance charts to be displayed within school

- Individual pupil's 100% attendance recognised and rewarded each term with badge, certificate and entry into prize draw at end of school year
- Letters home thanking parents or carers for supporting 100% attendance each term
- Individual pupil's over 97% attendance recognised and rewarded each term with good attendance sticker
- Letters sent home to parents or carers when there is an improvement in attendance or punctuality

9. Absence Procedures

First Day of Absence

Priestsic Primary and Nursery School has in place a system of first-day contact. This means that parents will be contacted on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify, at an early stage, pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. If there is not a response on the first day, call/visits are made on the following days until contact is made.

Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their education, and that of others in their class, if they are late.

We will all encourage punctuality throughout each day and treat the matter sensitively as it may not be the fault of the child, Punctuality will be monitored alongside attendance and should any issues arise, parents will be sent a letter asked to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer and/or Family Support Worker.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Any child arriving late will need to go to the School office with their parent/carer, so that a reason for lateness can be given. This is the only way to enter the building so that school is not disrupted in any way. Please do not ask the class teacher or members of staff to open any outside doors because it is important that we keep our school safe for everyone.

For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the school office. Any child arriving after a medical appointment will need to go to the School office with their parent/carer, so that a reason for lateness can be given. This is the only way to enter the building so that school is not disrupted in any way. Please do not ask the class teacher or members of staff to open any outside doors because it is important that we keep our school safe for everyone.

The school will always follow up any absences to:

- ascertain the reason for the absence;
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken – this may include a doorstep visit by two members of school staff. At least one staff member undertaking the doorstep visit will be a school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If the location of the child is out of the local area then a phone call to speak with the absent child may be made by a Designated Safeguarding Lead
 - identify whether the absence is authorised or not;
- identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not usually request medical evidence where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, staff reserve the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. The procedures for following up absences is as follows:

10. Attendance Register and Register Codes

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes

The school uses Sims to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement

B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes

O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Categorising Absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence ('N' code) unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.

Priestsic Primary and Nursery School recognises the clear links between attendance and pupil outcomes, and attendance and safeguarding children.

How absence is managed can be found on the Action on Absence Chart at the end of the document

11. Exceptional Absence Requests

It is a legal requirement for parents/carers to obtain the permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school to take any leave in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for leave during term time and may be issued with a Penalty Notice (£160 per parent/carer per child) if they do so without prior arrangement with the Headteacher.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for exceptional absence should complete the form: Exceptional Absence Requests. These can be obtained from the school office, the website or in the Appendices of this policy.

All requests for exceptional absence will be handled by the headteacher – **please note that legislation only allows the headteacher to authorise such leave in exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore, the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account.

- Priestsic Primary and Nursery School will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence requests other than in exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing, using the school's documentation with accompanying appropriate evidence, at least 4 weeks in advance of the intended absence dates.
- Parents/Carers must understand that sending their children to school every day is a legal requirement and good attendance and punctuality prior to a leave of absence request is not a permission for a leave of absence request to be authorised.

- Every request is treated as unique and comparisons are not made.
- Consistency in approach is a priority.
- Priestsic Primary and Nursery School will NOT authorise a leave of absence request during periods of national tests, ie SATS.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- family holidays, unless the circumstances are exceptional
- if insufficient evidence provided in the request
- if evidence submitted as part of the request did not justify exceptional leave
- if the pupil's attendance rate is already below the school attendance target (97%)
- if the absence would reduce pupil's attendance rate to below school attendance target (97%)
- if pupil's attendance record shows previous, in year, unauthorised absence
- if the pupil's patterns of absence are already a cause for concern
- if the absence would be detrimental to the pupil's progress
- if the absence falls during assessments/external tests ie SATs.

Please note that this list is not only limited to these examples

If exceptional term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school **will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a fixed penalty notice**. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments and may be asked to produce evidence for these appointments. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

12. Issuing of Penalty Notices

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance or whereabouts but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

In the vast majority of instances, penalty notices will be the last resort where all other efforts to address non-attendance or poor punctuality have failed.

Priestsc Primary and Nursery School is committed to ensuring every possible measure and level of support has been provided (as detailed in section 8 Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance) before making a recommendation that a penalty notice be requested from the Local Authority.

A recommendation for the LA to issue a penalty notice will always consider the following factors:

- Age of child
- Number of children in the family
- The possible effect on other siblings
- The extent of the non-attendance
- Family history regarding school attendance
- Previous convictions
- Whether parenting support would be more appropriate to prosecution

If the school has evidence that a parent has removed a child from school for the purposes of a holiday during term time without authorisation and the level of absence is 5 days (10 sessions) in total over a 10 week rolling period, then the school can issue or request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices to each parent/carer for each child to whom unauthorised absence applies.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Penalty Notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will;

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Governing Body and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

13. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the school's six core values of Respect, Resilience, Responsibility, Self-Belief, Independence and Kindness are upheld and supported.

For example:

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.
- Encouraging children to want to have high levels of attendance and be proud of this.
- To be united as a school in maintaining a high expectation of attendance.
- For pupils and parents to hold themselves to account, being punctual and not taking days out of school unnecessarily

Schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children. The best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly. Attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development.



14 Action on Absence Chart – Missing Child

Priestsic Primary and Nursery School

Action on Absence Chart – Missing Child

CHILD ABSENT → teacher leaves SIMS blank unless known reason

→ Office staff checks for reason, or phone call home or text is undertaken



2nd DAY ABSENT → investigate absence → phone call home or text is undertaken



3 rd DAY ABSENT → phone call home or text is undertaken



NO RESPONSE



REFER TO DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD



DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD TO INVESTIGATE AND TO UNDERTAKE DOORSTEP VISIT ALONGSIDE FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER/ATTENDANCE OFFICER

POSSIBLE CONTACT WITH GLEN SCRUBY (FULL REFERRAL ON 10TH DAY OF ABSENCE) – MISSING CHILD OFFICER LOCAL AUTHORITY