ATTENDANCE, REGISTRATION & ABSENCE POLICY

THIS POLICY INCLUDES THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Policy Author:	Deputy Head Pastoral Grace Partridge
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1. INTRODUCTION:

Pennthorpe places great emphasis on pupils developing good patterns of attendance. 'Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn' DfE (Working together to improve school attendance. 2024)

2. DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION POLICIES & GUIDANCE:

Children missing education (2024)

Working together to improve school attendance (2024)

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (2024)

3. ATTENDANCE:

A culture of good school attendance includes:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of our vision, values, ethos and day to day life;
- the connections between attendance and pupil welfare, including fulfilling academic potential and attainment, developing good patterns of behaviour, and supporting pupils with particular needs (such as educational needs, medical conditions, disabilities and mental health issues);
- the importance of setting and communicating high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils; and
- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of wider welfare and safeguarding issues.

Whilst attendance is a whole school issue; it is overseen by the Deputy Head Pastoral, who has overall responsibility for championing good attendance at school, working closely with the Heads of Year.

This includes regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it and reviewing historic and emerging patterns across the school.

The school has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and pupils are made aware of these, including that:

- they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day
- they are expected to punctually arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons and activities
- they should not leave a lesson or the school site without permission
- any unexplained absence will be followed up
- persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School
- if pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending School or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff.

4. ABSENCE:

If pupils miss a school day, lesson, or other commitment without a valid reason, then they can expect disciplinary action to be taken against them. If parents remove pupils from school for a reason which Pennthorpe deems not to be legitimate (e.g. a holiday) then the Deputy Head Pastoral would typically write to those parents and remind them of their contractual obligations.

The School must provide the Local Authority with names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (UA, N, I, and/or U).

Children Missing Education

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET* (not in education, employment or training) later in life. (DfE Children Missing Education 2024)

Young people not in education, employment or training

Children Absent from Education

Often children can be persistently absent from school or have prolonged absences. There may be a satisfactory reason for their absence, most often medical, for why this is needed, for example, the child is having operations/treatments.

If a child is frequently absent but there does not appear to be a satisfactory reason, this is different from a child being a 'child missing in education' (as described above) but it is still a concern.

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As stated above, it is mandatory that children of a compulsory age attend school, but of most importance, frequent absences impact on a child's development across all domains, not purely cognitive.

If a child's absence continues despite interventions to identify and address the underlying cause with both the child and parents, then consideration may be given to seeking advice from the local authority in order to support the family.

Where pupils are regularly or persistently absent for reasons of mental or physical ill health, special educational needs and/or disabilities, Pennthorpe's approach is typically to work closely with the family to firstly understand the precise reasons for absence and the likely time-scales involved, to work on a plan for returning to school or increasing attendance, and then to carefully monitor that attendance over time.

Where there are particularly difficult issues of absence over a period of time, contact would usually be made with the CME team at West Sussex County Council - Here.

More information is available in DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance and Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. - Here

5. REGISTRATION:

Registration is required by law at the beginning of each morning session and at the beginning of the first afternoon session.

The process of registration is combined with protected Form time in the morning and the afternoon. This allows tutors and Heads of Year to spend time with their pupils, and can be useful for giving out information and informal pastoral work.

Prep School

- Morning registration is at 8:15am in their form room.
- Registration for sports fixtures takes place during lunch break.
- Registration must be supervised by a member of staff; form tutors are expected to attend each registration and should make appropriate cover arrangements if they are unable to be there.
- Registration is electronic and is done using the school's information management system, Engage.
- Front Office staff are responsible for producing the report of absences (using Engage). This will contain both explained and unauthorized absences. Front Office staff are also responsible for contacting parents to ascertain the reason for absence where possible.
- Pupils arriving late to school after 8.45 must report to the Front Office to sign in, entering school via the main entrance. Any pupil absent from registration for any reason but who is on site must register with their form tutor first.
- Each morning, Front Office staff make every effort to follow up pupils whose absence is unexplained:
  - they contact subject teachers to see if a pupil may actually be in lessons;

- they make phone calls to follow up unexplained absences with families or guardians which is then followed up with an email if required.
  - they then liaise with the pastoral team regarding any as yet unexplained absences by 10am, copying this information to tutors and Heads of Year.
  - The pastoral team are responsible for chasing up these unexplained absences as a priority.
- Parents are asked to use the Parent Portal to record any absences or request leave for their child.
- During registration periods form tutors must see that all pupils are ready for the day ahead and that they are correctly dressed and have the correct equipment etc for the day.
- Staff who are organising trips, activities and fixtures which take pupils out of their normal timetabled lessons should inform Front Office, who will mark the child as 'educational visit or trip' meaning that class teachers can see that a pupil has an authorised absence and should not expect them to be in their lesson.

Nursery & Pre-Prep
- Morning registration is at 9.00am in their classroom or Early Years setting.
- Registration for sports fixtures takes place after lunch in their classroom.
- Registration must be supervised by a member of staff; form tutors are expected to attend each registration and should make appropriate cover arrangements if they are unable to be there.
- Registration is electronic and is done using the school's information management system, Engage.
- Front Office staff are responsible for producing the report of absences (using Engage). This will contain both explained and unauthorized absences. Front Office staff are also responsible for contacting parents to ascertain the reason for absence where possible.
- Pupils arriving late to school after 9.00am must report to the Front Office to sign in, entering school via the main entrance. Any pupil absent from registration for any reason but who is on site must register with their form tutor first.
- Each morning, Front Office staff make every effort to follow up pupils whose absence is unexplained:
  - they contact subject teachers to see if a pupil may actually be in lessons;
  - they make phone calls to follow up unexplained absences with families or guardians which is then followed up with an email if required.
  - they then liaise with the pastoral team regarding any as yet unexplained absences by 10.30am, copying this information to tutors and Heads of Year.
  - The pastoral team are responsible for chasing up these unexplained absences as a priority.
- Parents are asked to use the Parent Portal to record any absences or request leave for their child.
- During registration periods form tutors must see that all pupils are ready for the day ahead and that they are correctly dressed and have the correct equipment etc for the day.
- Staff who are organising trips, activities and fixtures which take pupils out of their normal timetabled lessons should inform Front Office, who will mark the child as 'educational visit

or trip' meaning that class teachers can see that a pupil has an authorised absence and should not expect them to be in their lesson.

Responsibilities of Form tutors

- To complete the registers (or oversee their completion) as early as is possible in each registration session.
- To check any answer phone, email messages, MSP absence requests or notes from pupils and amend the register as soon as possible to reduce wasted time by reception staff making unnecessary calls.
- To keep up to date telephone contact information in Engage by passing any changes to the Admissions office as soon as possible.
- To confirm reasons for absence rates over 10% based on the weekly analysis of absence data.

Responsibilities for Front Office Staff

- Produce and post the list of absentees for each session.
- To contact parents of pupils whose absence is not authorised and to amend Engage accordingly.
- Record late pupils on Engage using the recommended codes.
- Take fire registers to the Home Ground in the event of a Fire Alarm sounding.

Responsibilities of the Deputy Head Pastoral

In line with Government guidance, the Deputy Head Pastoral is the designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed. The Deputy Head Pastoral sits on the School's SLT & SMT and is tasked to:

- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence, making sure they are followed by all staff;
- Ensure school staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures;
- Have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school; and
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.

In addition, the Deputy Head Pastoral will:

- Liaise with the Heads of Year regarding levels of absence and necessary follow-up action; if a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, consideration as to next steps will be made, taking into account possibly safeguarding implications, as well as the pastoral, parental and disciplinary possibilities. Each Head of Year receives a summary of the pupils' attendance at the end of each week.
- Inform the Local Authority of pupils leaving the school roll, in accordance with the government guidance on the regulations which can be found here. In particular, the

Deputy Head Pastoral should ensure that a pupil is not deleted from the school roll until the school and Local Authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts.

6. ATTENDANCE REGISTER CODES – *PENNTHORPE - ENGAGE*:

Detailed guidance on the codes is available in Chapter 8 of DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance, which should be consulted in case of uncertainty. - Here

REASON	CODE	STATUS
Present (Morning)	**/**	Attendance
Present	/	Attendance
Educated Off-site	B	Attendance
Other Authorised circumstances	C	Authorised Absence
Dual Registered (visiting another school)	D	Authorised Absence
Family Holiday Agreed	H	Authorised Absence
Family Holiday - NOT agreed	G	Unauthorised Absence
illness	I	Authorised Absence
Interview - Future school	J	Authorised Absence
Approved sporting activity (music exam)	P	Authorised Absence
Religious Observance	R	Authorised Absence
Educational visit or trip	V	Attendance
Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory	X	Attendance
Partial and forced closure	Y	Authorised Absence
School closed to all pupils	#	Attendance
Off Games	@	Attendance
Unauthorised Absence	UA	Unauthorised Absence
Absent (Authorised - No Reason)	a	Authorised Absence

Absent (No Reason)	N	Unauthorised Absence
Medical or Dental	M	Authorised Absence
Absent (Funeral)	f	Authorised Absence
Late (Authorised)	l	Attendance
Late - arrived after registration	U	Unauthorised Absence

7. SAFEGUARDING:

Issues are flagged to the DSL to monitor the possibility of a child missing in education or child absent from education. Further processes outlining management of attendance in relation to safeguarding is outlined in the safeguarding policy.

8. REQUESTING LEAVE IN ADVANCE:

To request leave in advance, parents/guardians should complete the 'Leave Request Form' on Engage which will send a request through to the necessary staff depending its nature. These requests will be 'signed-off' by the Heads of Year.

Parents wishing to take their children on holiday during term time, depart early for holidays or return to school late afterwards, should write to the Head requesting permission to do so. It is not normal procedure to sanction absence for holidays in term time. If parents remove their child without the permission of the school, this absence is unauthorised and the pupil's place in the school may not be secure.

9. RECORD KEEPING:

- The master copy of the electronic register (Engage) is kept centrally (and administered by Front Office staff). All master copies of registers are held centrally for 5 years.
- Letters informing the school of future absence or explaining absence should be kept in pupil files on Engage.
- If pupils are present during registration but are going out of school anytime afterwards, they are still marked as present.
- Lists of pupils on trips or matches should always be with Reception Staff.
- School holidays should be clearly marked.

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- Heads of Year and tutors are asked to review overall attendance rates regularly, and to follow-up possible issues with attendance and to be aware of any potential school refusal or safeguarding concerns which may be affecting a pupil's attendance.

Should any parent or pupil have any queries about attendance they should contact their child's tutor in the first instance, escalating to their Head of Year or the Deputy Head Pastoral as appropriate.