



# Paulerspury C.E Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Date Adopted:	September 2019
Written by:	Robin Bunting
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**Our policies are written with our School Values in mind. These are:**

Care,  
Courage,  
Creativity,  
Forgiveness,

Honesty,  
Hope,  
Perseverance  
Respect,

Responsibility,  
Thankfulness  
Trust.

Historic

Parent choice

Staff/Governor choice

Pupil choice

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### 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 3. School procedures

#### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils may enter school from 8.40. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 and will be kept open until 9.00. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.55 and will be kept open until 1.00.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

If a pupil arrives not more than 30 minutes after the registration period, they must report to the school office for signing into the late register. They will then be registered as 'late' for that session.

If a pupil arrives 30 minutes or more after the closure of the register, they must advise the School Office and will be entered into the lateness register. They will be registered as unauthorised absent for the session unless an appropriate explanation is received.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

It is the responsibility of the school finance and administration assistant to contact parents to establish the reason for any unexplained absence, record appropriately and report any concerns to the Senior Leadership Team.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Attendance is reported annually as part of the annual school report.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- visiting seriously ill relatives
- bereavement of a close family member for the funeral service only, not extended leave
- wedding of a close family member
- taking a child abroad for medical treatment
- important religious observances but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- families of service personnel returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for

occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Leave which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

**School will not authorise term time holidays in the following circumstances:**

- Where there is a pattern of the same holiday request year on year.
- Where there have been previous term time holiday absences of any length in the same Key Stage (for this purpose Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 count as the same Key Stage.)
- Where pupils are in Year 2 or Year 6 (national curriculum testing years)
- Where there is a retrospective request for term time holiday
- Where there is a history of poor attendance
- Where there is failure to evidence that any request is due to an exceptional circumstance.

If parents believe exceptional circumstances exist, they must explain the detailed reasons in writing to the Headteacher. A letter should be attached to the school's Leave of Absence Form (Appendix 2).

Members of the school's Governing Body may be consulted before any decision is reached. Parents must complete this procedure before making any travel arrangements.

The final decision will be given within five school days. Multiple applications within one school year will automatically be refused.

Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance  
14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance  
20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance  
30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 per week.

## **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Parents can be fined for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Local Authority, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

## [Code of Conduct: Penalty Notices to Address Absences and Poor Attendance at School or Alternative Provision](#)

This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

### **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Overall attendance levels at the school are good. Parents are supportive and recognise the importance of their children regularly attending. Staff emphasise the importance of being in school and encourage the children to attend.

### **6. Attendance monitoring**

The school has rigorous systems in place to monitor absence and identify those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. This will include children whose attendance falls below acceptable levels.

If a child is absent from school and no reason has been received, then the office staff will ring the child's parents to seek an explanation. If a reason is given verbally this should be confirmed in writing on the child's return to school.

If a child continues to be absent the school will contact the parents to enquire into the child's wellbeing and ascertain an expected return to school date.

If a child's overall level of attendance drops below 90% then the school will investigate further. This may be due to:

- Prolonged illness
- Ongoing medical treatment
- Criminal or court proceedings
- Illness of a close family member
- Arrangements for Looked after Children/Children in care or other changes in family circumstance
- Other circumstances defined at the time

If no acceptable reason exists for persistent absence, then the school will work with the family to set targets for improved attendance. If necessary other agencies will be involved to support the family in meeting their targets.

If persistent absence falls below 85% then the school will liaise with the Local Education Authority who may consider fines or legal proceedings.

Office staff will report monthly to the Headteacher on persistent absence and any reasons for it. The headteacher will then contact the parents of any pupils who are persistent absent without good reason.

The school collects and stores attendance data using the school management information system (SIMS). The school provides attendance data to the DFE as requires, using SIMS to send data as part of the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

The school uses attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular pupils or groups of pupils whose absence may be a cause for concern. Where attendance is a concern the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, class or group of pupils, for example gender or ethnicity. The school use the data to identify the main causes of absence within the school and to take action to address and improve these areas as necessary. The school will use the data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance rates are included in the Headteacher's report to governors which is prepared before each full governing body meeting

### **7.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The attendance officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **7.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for completing registers on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office. Office staff ensure that absences are recorded using the correct codes.

### **7.5 Office/staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy



**Appendix 1: attendance codes**

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

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious

		observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2



Paulerspury C.E.V.C. Primary School  
Application for Leave of Absence

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Leave of Absence \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Holiday letter attached:

I request permission for the above named child to be absent

From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmed by the Head Teacher/Governing Body

Date: