



PEWITHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please note that this school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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1. Aims

At Pewithall Primary School, we believe that regular school attendance is central to raising standards in education and to improving the life chances of all children. Regular attendance at school enables children to gain maximum benefit from the range of educational and wider opportunities available to them. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Ensure every pupil has access to the appropriate full-time education to which they are entitled
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence including persistent absence;
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[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.

[School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Alternative provision - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities



3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

If you have a link governor for attendance, or a committee responsible for attendance, add details of their role in the monitoring of pupil attendance.

3.2 The Headteacher (Attendance Lead)

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- 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
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Organising targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Liaising with Halton Education Welfare Officer regarding fixed penalty notices

3.3 The Attendance Champion

The school Attendance Champion 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The attendance champion is Mrs. Holman and can be contacted via the school office ([01928 576139](tel:01928576139))



3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
Raising awareness of the benefits of good attendance and punctuality to all pupils.

3.5 School office staff

School office staff are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information, and enter the correct codes on the school system
- Taking calls/emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Recording details of children who arrive late and entering appropriate codes on the school system
- Making first day response calls to parents of absent children where no contact has been received. Leave messages and make follow up with further call if no initial contact can be made
- Call other contacts on child's contact list where parents/carers where not able to be contacted
- Informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any cases where the explanation for absence gives
- Potential cause for concern, and where additional support or intervention may be required.
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance where necessary

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- To ensure that their child attends school every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine
- and unavoidable reason that prevents them from so doing
- To ensure that their child arrives at school by 8.30am. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- To inform school as soon as possible but by 9:30am at the latest, by 'phone or in person, if their child
- is unable to attend on any day, together with the reason for absence
- To trust that school staff will contact them during the school day if a child is ill in school and needs to
- go home
- To ensure that school has at least two sets of full contact details, and that these are kept updated
- To make all medical/dental appointments outside school hours whenever possible, and to inform school in advance. For absence to be authorised as a



medical absence, school require will evidence, such as an appointment card or letter

- To ensure that their child is collected on time at the end of the school day
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods, and to be aware that there is **no entitlement to** authorised leave of absence during term time.
- Requests for leave of absence during term time should be made in writing and in advance to the head teacher; (form available from school office)
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and to be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during assessment/exam weeks
- To provide evidence and advice from a health professional when needed to enable school to gain a greater understanding of their child's health issues
- To talk to school staff as soon as possible should their child be reluctant to come to school for any reason, or if there are any other issues impacting on school attendance. This enables school to work with you and put support in place at the earliest opportunity

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- To talk with a trusted adult about any issues that are making it difficult for them to come to school, or that are affecting their wellbeing in school;
- Where age appropriate, to be aware of their attendance targets, and to work towards achieving them.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the school day and at the start of the afternoon session.

- 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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8.45 am and will be kept open until 9:00 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school office by 9.00am on each day of absence if their child is too ill, or unable to attend school for an urgent reason. If we are not informed of the reason for your child's absence, we will phone you.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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.

4.3 Planned absence

Parents/carers should endeavor to make medical/dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the school office should be notified as soon as possible and provide proof of the appointment.

Schools can accept the following as medical evidence:

- GP certificate
- Letter from health professional
- Appointment card / letter (dated)
- Prescription / Medication in the name of the child
- Note from GP or NHS confirming an appointment
- Care of the chemist – date stamped slip to show medical advice has been sought

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

The pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.



4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Arriving at school by 8.30 am every morning is very important and allows children to be settled and organized for the day. It positively affects children socially and academically and sets good habits for life.

If your child arrives late:

- They miss out on important learning, which could affect their achievement.
- Class teaching has to stop while the teacher repeats initial instructions
- Disruption to the learning of the rest of the class.
- They don't have the social time to settle into class.
- It can be embarrassing for them.

Registers are marked by 8.45a.m. If children arrive after this time, parents/carers must accompany their child and report to the school office. They will receive a late mark in the register (code L).

Registers will close at 9.a.m. If children arrive after this time, they will be recorded as having arrived after closure of registers (code U). This counts as an unauthorised absence for that session.

If a child arrives late and is unaccompanied by a parent/carer, school will make contact to establish the reason for lateness. If lateness becomes a regular occurrence, it will be treated in the same way as unauthorised absence, with parents/carers being contacted and invited into school to discuss the situation.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.

Call the contacts listed on the child's record if parents/carers are uncontactable

Make a home visit where appropriate (See Appendix 1)

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer/children's social care.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers



The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels for example, via written reports, letters and calls.

Where a child's attendance falls below 95%, parent's carers will be notified in writing or receive a call from the Headteacher or member of senior leadership team.

Where a child's attendance falls below 90% (persistently absent) Parents/carers will be notified in writing may be invited to an Attendance Support Meeting.

Where a child is persistently late parents/carers will be informed in writing or receive a phone call from a member of teaching staff

Letter	Attendance Band	Attendance Covered	Purpose of Letter for Parents
Letter one	Green Band	100% attendance Above 97% Improved punctuality/attendance	To celebrate your child having perfect attendance. To celebrate your child having outstanding attendance. To celebrate your child's improved punctuality/attendance.
Letter Two	Orange Band	Below 95% Punctuality concerns	To let you know your child's attendance/punctuality is dropping close to being a concern and will be monitored. (See Appendix 2 and 3)
Letter Three	Red Band	Attendance continuing to fall below 95%, continuing punctuality or illness concerns	Attendance/punctuality is a significant concern, home school link to identify barriers and put support in place for the child and family. Monitor. (See Appendix 4 and 5)
Letter Four	Red Band	Below 90%	To monitor attendance trends weekly Your child is now in the persistent absenteeism category: you will be invited in to an Attendance Support Meeting to identify barriers and discuss a plan of action for supporting you and improving attendance. (See Appendix 6 and 7)

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Taking leave of absence in term time affects children's educational progress, and parents are strongly discouraged from withdrawing their child from school during term time. All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance to school. Request forms are available from the school office. (See Appendix 8)



Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of the agreed number of days, will be classed as unauthorised absence, and may result in the issue of Education Penalty Notices by the Local Authority.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Halton Borough Council may consider that the following circumstances are "special" or "exceptional".

- To allow a pupil to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons
- Unavoidable circumstances e.g. the parent/carer has inflexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed by the employer.
- A family member is seriously ill.
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family.

Exceptional circumstances are **NOT**:

- Availability of cheap flights and/or holidays.
- Availability of desired accommodation.
- Parent/carer work commitments.
- Poor weather experienced during school holiday periods.
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term/half term.
-

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness
- Emergency/unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- 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.



5.2 Pupils on a part-time timetable

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education.

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

5.3 Children with Medical Needs

School's Governing Body must ensure that arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions in school. Individual healthcare plans should be in place, and these should provide clarity about what needs to be done, when, and by whom in order to ensure that children with medical needs may access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child (see DfE statutory guidance issued in April 2014: 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions').

The primary aim of educating children and young people who have medical needs is to minimise, as far as possible, the disruption to their normal schooling by allowing them to continue their education and to progress as much as their medical needs allow. 'Medical needs' encompass both physical health and mental/emotional health issues. In circumstances where a child has complex health needs and is medically unfit to attend school, referral may be made to Debbie Houghton, Principal Education Welfare Officer, Tel: 0151 511 8231 (Lead Officer for the Halton Borough Council for pupils medically unfit to attend school). Medical referrals must come jointly from both school and paediatrician, NHS specialist consultant, CAMHS psychiatrist or senior CAMHS therapist/psychologist.

5.4 Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

This government supports headteachers in using suspension and permanent exclusion as a sanction when warranted as part of creating a calm, safe, and supportive environment in which pupils can learn and thrive. To achieve this, suspension and permanent exclusion are sometimes a necessary part of a functioning system, where it is accepted that not all pupil behaviour can be amended or remedied by pastoral processes, or consequences within the school.

Only the headteacher of a school can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year), or permanently excluded.

A suspension can also be for parts of the school day. For example, if a pupil's behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive, they may be suspended from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. The legal requirements relating to the suspension, such as the headteacher's duty to notify parents, apply in all cases. Lunchtime suspensions are counted as half a school day.



During the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, if your child is found in a public place during normal school hours without reasonable justification, you may receive a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority or face prosecution. Your child may also be removed from the public place by the police and taken to designated premises.

School registers will be marked using the appropriate codes when a pupil is suspended or permanently excluded.

5.5 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority has a range of legal powers to promote and enforce regular school attendance:

- Penalty Notices (Section 444A Education Act 1996)
- Prosecution of Parents / Carers in Magistrates' Court (Section 444 (1) / Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996)
- Application to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order in respect of the child (Children Act 1989)
- School Attendance Order (Section 437 Education Act 1996)
- Parenting Order (Section 8 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in any one term, or across two half terms, is required to trigger the Penalty Notice process. A session is a half-day.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from the Education Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs.



6. Strategies for promoting attendance

It is important for school to recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance/punctuality of our pupils. This can be done in a variety of ways. Pewithall Primary School uses incentives such as:

- Celebratory letter for pupils above 97% attendance
- Half termly class and individual attendance incentives for most improved punctuality/attendance
- Certificates and badges for attendance/punctuality on a weekly/termly and annual basis
- Annual attendance prize for the class with the best attendance.

These incentives are reviewed and their impact evaluated regularly – changes are made if deemed appropriate.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies



7.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE and is updated, as a minimum every year by Mr D Baugh, Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

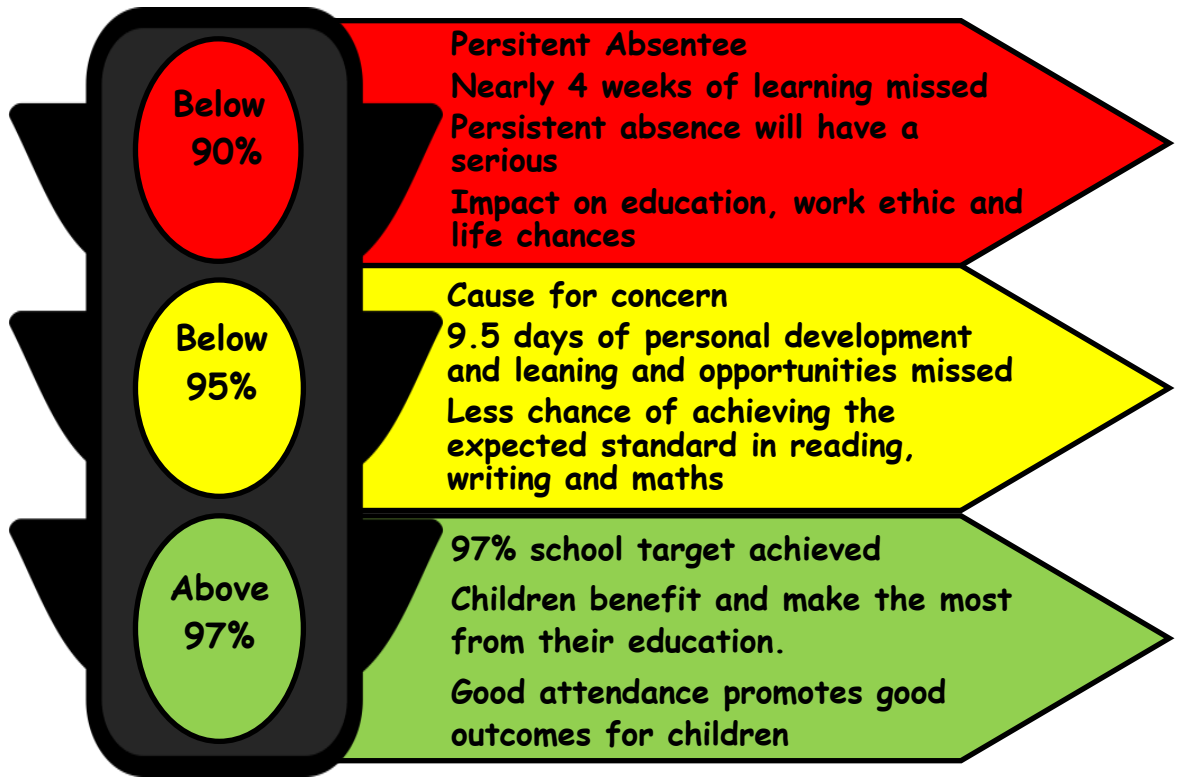
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



Appendix 1: ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
	Present	
	Authorised absence	
	Unauthorised absence	
	Approved Education Activity (Present)	
	Not counted in possible attendances	
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY



Policy reviewed: July 2023
Policy minuted: September 2023
Date to be reviewed: June 2024

Signed: *D.P. Baugh* Headteacher
Date:

Signed: *A. Panton* Chair of Governors
Date: