



9<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

At The Piggott School, we are committed to ensuring that all our students have full access to a first-class education and a positive school experience. We want to secure a culture where all students can, and want to, be in school. High levels of attendance are crucial for inclusion, securing learning and progress across the curriculum and establishing a sense of belonging at school.

The Department for Education has recently published new statutory guidance outlining the expectation of all schools to build strong and productive relationships with students and their families to secure high levels of attendance. The guidance states clearly that it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure that their child receives an education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where a child is registered at a school, it is every parent's legal duty to ensure that they attend every day, except in a small number of allowable circumstances due to illness or an agreed authorised reason.

The school recognises, and understands, that attendance to school is extremely challenging for some young people. Where absence is a concern, key members of the pastoral team will take the time to listen to, and understand, the barriers to attendance. They will seek to work collaboratively with the student's family to explore what temporary amendments or adjustments are required, whilst planning for supportive provision that will meet the needs of the student, leading to improved and maximised attendance.

To reflect our commitment to ensuring high levels of attendance, the school attendance policy has been updated and will be available on our website in the coming weeks. We encourage parents and carers to reference it to ensure that they understand the processes in place at school and the planned action for any student whose attendance falls short of the expected threshold.

### **Persistent absence and term time holiday**

There is a national concern regarding the trends of persistent absence and term time holiday. Research shows that there is a direct correlation between high levels of attendance and high levels of student attainment in examinations. If students are in school and enjoying their time at the Piggott, they can make the most of all opportunities presented to them. Every day missed will impact the outcomes that a young person can achieve.

### **Attendance facts**

- Students with 90% attendance will have had the equivalent of 1 day off every 2 weeks.
- Students with 80% attendance will have had the equivalent of 1 day off every week.



## Punctuality facts

- Being late means students miss out on education, just the same as being absent from school. It also disrupts learning and teaching for the student, their peers and the teacher.
- 5 minutes missed from lessons or tutor period due to being late every day equates to 3 days lost per year.
- 15 minutes missed from lessons or tutor period due to being late every day equates to 10 days lost a year.
- 30 minutes missed from lessons or tutor period due to being late every day equates to 19 days lost per year.

We understand that absence will occur. Illness will happen and sometimes students will be absent because they are on a trip or visit. Whatever the reason, missing school is not without consequence on learning. It is, therefore, important for students to understand that they will need to make up the missed work as soon as possible. This is essential to prevent them from falling behind and to ensure that they remain fully included in the classroom. To do this they can:

- Talk to their teacher and check Satchel one.
- Look on Google Classroom.

## Reporting an absence:

If you wish to report a student absence, this can be done by emailing or leaving a message by phone.

For students in Year 7 to 11 : Attendance email communication should be sent to [Attendance@piggottschool.org](mailto:Attendance@piggottschool.org)

For students in Year 12 and 13 : [6thFormAttendance@piggottschool.org](mailto:6thFormAttendance@piggottschool.org)

Parents are expected to notify the school before 9am each day their child is absent.

Where a student does not register for a morning session and there is no explanation for the absence via email or phone, the school will contact the parent to inform them and request a reason for absence. The school day begins at 8.30am and morning registration closes at 9am. All absence should be confirmed, and explained, by 9.30am every morning.

Medical and dental appointments should not be made during the school day unless necessary, in which case an email or a signed letter from the parent is required. In addition, students must sign in and out at reception at the allocated time.

## Penalty Notices (PNs)

The school is expected to have a strong working partnership with the Local Authority by collaboratively working with the Education Welfare Service. Regular consultations take place with our Education Welfare Officer, during which the school will discuss, and implement, the issuing of Penalty Notices (PN). This is action taken against a family due to unauthorised absence.



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The threshold for a PN is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closed all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive, but it is not a requirement. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

When the school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, we are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a PN in each individual case:

Is support appropriate in this case?

- If support is appropriate, we are expected to continue with the existing support without a PN, or issue a Notice to Improve. If that support is not working, or more importantly it is not being engaged with, a PN can be issued.
- First penalty notice is charged at £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days.
- Second penalty notice £160 if paid within 28 days.
- Third penalty notice would not be considered, this would go to prosecution.
- There will be a 3-year limit per family per child and after 3 years the process will start again

**As a Wokingham school, we are expected to follow the local authority guidance on the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, which is:**

The issuing of a Penalty Notice will usually be considered appropriate in the following circumstances (these are cited as examples and are not meant to be exhaustive):

- Overt truancy.
- Parentally condoned absences.
- Unauthorised holidays in term-time – 5 days or more.
- Excessive delayed return from authorised extended holidays without prior school agreement.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) - i.e. 10 occasions in a 10-school week period
- Less than 80% attendance, the absences being unauthorised; during a 4-week period
- A pupil having been excluded from a Wokingham school, being found present in a public place, during school hours, without reasonable justification.



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### **To request a leave of absence:**

We do not expect any parents to request permission for holidays for their children during the school term unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any requests should be submitted to the school at least 15 school days before the holiday dates.

The Headteacher will determine whether the circumstances are exceptional or not. Please note that there is no automatic right to take a holiday in term time. The Headteacher will decide how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Whilst the cost of a holiday might be a reason for absence, it is not considered to be sufficient to be an exceptional reason. Please be aware that unauthorised holiday absence of 5 days or more can now result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice which carries a fine of £80 or if not paid after 21 days, then the fine is doubled to £160 or court prosecution if unpaid after 28 days. Penalty Notices are served per parent, per child.

Should you wish to request a term time absence, please complete the online form below at least 15 days in advance of the absence.

[Absence request](#)

### **How attendance is monitored in our school:**

Attendance is monitored by every teacher; every lesson and it is the responsibility of all members of the school.

The pastoral support team check attendance lesson by lesson. Overall attendance patterns for individual students are scrutinised fortnightly by pastoral leaders and key members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Regular meetings are held with the Education Welfare Team from Wokingham to discuss support plans and interventions, alongside the consideration of PNs.

Where a student's attendance is at risk of falling below 90%, the attendance team will contact home, so that the school can work in partnership with the student and parents to identify barriers, establish support and move towards improved engagement. The school will encourage parents to make use of outside agencies where appropriate.

### **Where to get help and support for your child:**

In the first instance, all attendance enquiries should be emailed to your child's tutor, Head of Year or Head of Key Stage.

Ms S Foster is our Intervention Lead who works with complex attendance needs to provide guidance and support.

Ms K Thornton is the Senior Teacher who leads on attendance across the school.

Mr D Bibby is the Designated Safeguarding Lead ( DSL)



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Our partnership with students and their parents remains central to securing the well-being, positive mental health and happiness of our students. We understand that life can be very challenging, and we care deeply about supporting our students to be able to access learning so that they can enjoy success and live life in all its fullness. It is important that our students are in school and engaged so that they may have opportunity and choices in adult life.

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your communication will be met with sensitivity and empathy, and we will work together to formulate a plan of support to move forward together.

Yours faithfully,

Ms K Thornton

Assistant Headteacher – Lead for Attendance



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