



The Piggott School: Secondary Phase

‘Go and do Likewise’ Luke 10:25-37, The Parable of the Good Samaritan

We live with love and compassion, seeking help in times of need.

Attendance Policy

Author:	Assistant Headteacher for attendance and Lead Governance Professional
Approver:	Local Governing Committee
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Category of policy:	Local Governing Committee

Changes history

Version:	Date:	Amended by:	Substantive changes:	Purpose:
1	January 2025	Assistant Headteacher for attendance and Lead Governance Professional		To reflect the new DfE guidance: working together to improve school attendance

This is a policy delegated to the Local Governing Committee of The Piggott School by the Agape Trust Board.

THIS POLICY WILL HELP THE SCHOOL TO FULFIL ITS AIMS BY:

- Promoting our Christian vision and values to create a community which values all Gods' children
- Nurturing a community where all of its members can develop and learn in a safe and secure environment that celebrates and promotes engagement with learning and development.
- Supporting individuals and their families with overcoming any barriers to full attendance and engagement with their learning, seeking help in their times of need
- Planning and implementing bespoke support required for individuals in order to access a full and comprehensive education
- Ensuring and setting high expectations for levels of attendance and punctuality in order to secure successful outcomes for all individuals, ensuring they are an enlightened generation, rooted in British Values, advocating for positive, sustainable change
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

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 School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

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

FOR THIS TO HAPPEN THE GOVERNORS UNDERTAKE TO:

1. Ensure that agreed procedures are known, acted upon consistently and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and all staff members
2. Ensure that these procedures are reviewed regularly whilst monitoring and reviewing impact, demonstrating moral and ethical leadership
1. Ensure there is shared responsibility between school staff, parents/carers and other professionals involved with students who find attending school challenging to ensure all children flourish and enjoy life in all its fullness
2. Set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
3. Recognise and promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
4. Make sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

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5. Work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
6. Monitor attendance figures for the whole school and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
7. Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Attendance procedures

The Education Act 1996 requires parents /carers to ensure their child receives an efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The Supreme Court has determined that 'regular' attendance means that which is ***"in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school"*** (Isle of Wight Council v Platt) (6th April 2017).

Commitment to Attendance

As a school we recognise the clear connection between regular attendance and achievement and will, therefore, value working collaboratively with parents/carers, the school's Local Governing Committee, and the Local Authority to ensure that pupils achieve maximum possible attendance.

Expectations

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 the designated senior lead responsible for attendance to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers 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/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

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

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- 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/carers 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
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms Karen Thornton and can be contacted via email on ThorntonK@piggottschool.org.

School staff

School staff will:

- Ensure registers are taken promptly at 08.30am for Years 7 – 11 and 8.40am for Years 12 and 13 using the DfE codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Registers will be taken again at start of the afternoon session. 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
- Tutor time begins with silent reading followed by a period of silent whole school reflection and spiritual growth.
- Contact parents/carers when a pupil has failed to arrive at school and where no message explaining absence has been received by 9.30am
- Send a written request to parents/carers where a pupil's absence is unexplained – *see note below on Authorised and Unauthorised Absence*
- Provide parents/carers with their child's percentage attendance at regular intervals throughout the academic year
- Work with parents/carers when there are concerns over a pupil's lack of regular attendance
- Notify the Education Welfare Service when a pupil fails to attend school regularly or when a pupil has missed 10 school days or more without permission: this being a legal requirement
- Where absences persist then a formal referral should be made to the Education Welfare Service which may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court

Pupils

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year unless there are good reasons for their absence
- Arrive at school on time and be appropriately prepared for the day
- Attend every timetabled session, on time

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- Bring to the attention of their form tutor or pastoral team, any issues that may affect their school attendance.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

We expect that all parents will:

- Ensure they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy, their legal responsibilities with regard to their child's education and the requirement to ensure their child's regular attendance at school
- Ensure their child attends school every day throughout the academic year unless school has approved the leave of absence
- Ensure their child arrives punctually and prepared for the school day
- Communicate with the school each day before 8.30am if their child is unable to attend due to illness or any other unavoidable circumstance by either calling 01189402357 or by sending an email (for Years 7-11 the email address is attendance@piggottschool.org for Years 12 and 13 the email address is 6thformattendance@piggottschool.org)
- Provide a written explanation for the absence when their child returns to school, including providing medical evidence where requested
- Avoid making medical, dental or other appointments during the school day
- Notify school of any issues that may affect their child's attendance, seeking the schools help where needed
- Advise school immediately of any changes to contact details and provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence OR has given approval in advance.

Unauthorised absence is when school does not accept an explanation as being reasonable justification for the absence, OR when no explanation has been provided despite a written request being sent to parents/carers, OR when the Headteacher has not approved a parent's/carer's request for leave of absence.

Parents/carers should be aware that it is the Headteacher's decision whether to authorise an absence or not. In the case of long term or frequent absences due to illness, a medical condition or mental health concern, supporting medical evidence may be requested. This could be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip from a doctor's surgery or a copy of a prescription. (Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for any cost.)

Punctuality/Lateness

It is crucial that pupils arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of other pupils in the class. It is paramount,

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therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time. The canteen and Library are open from 8.00am.

Registration takes place at 08.30am (for Years 7 – 11) and 8.40am (for Years 12 and 13). Pupils who arrive after that time will be recorded as late to school.

Registers close at 09.30 a.m. and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (This could lead to formal legal action by the local authority if the problem persists).

Persistent lateness by a pupil will initially be followed up by school staff and, if not resolved, will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.

Parents/carers should arrange medical, dental and other appointments outside of school time unless it is an emergency. Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.

Pupils must be signed out with their Pastoral Assistant on leaving the school and signed back in on their return. When a pupil is being collected from school, parents/carers must report to Reception before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.

If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person or contact Social Services.

Term Time Leave of Absence

At The Piggott School, we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure pupils flourish and achieve their full potential. There is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement.

The Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

We recognise that there may be occasions when a parent/carer considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence. In keeping with our Christian vision, the Headteacher will review these with love and compassion and may consider these to be exceptional circumstances. The law has removed the right for school to grant up to 10 days' leave of absence in special circumstances for the purposes of a family holiday and there is no automatic right to take any leave or holiday in term time.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

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As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

The school holiday dates, INSET days and other important dates are published on the school's website and parents/carers are asked to note these when planning holidays and family events. If there are exceptional reasons for requesting leave of absence during term time, the following procedures will apply:

- The parent/s or carer/s with whom the pupil normally resides must complete and submit a Leave of Absence form at least one month in advance of the requested absence. Forms are available from the school website. The Headteacher (or person authorised to do so on the Headteacher's behalf) will consider the application, and will decide whether or not the application can be granted on the basis of 'exceptional' circumstances. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending upon the specific circumstances of the particular application. School will endeavour to respond within 5 working days to the parent/s or carer/s who submitted the application. If a pupil is over compulsory school age (e.g. sixth form), leave can be requested or agreed by the pupil or a parent they normally live with.
- Where leave of absence is granted, the pupil's absence will be authorised.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

We will work with pupils/students and their families on a case-by-case basis to encourage them back to school. Where appropriate we will follow advice for Emotional Based School Avoidance and in some situations, we may introduce a part-time or modified timetable. In some instances, we will employ off-site provisions as a means to engage pupils/students.

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Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Please refer to our Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School policy. Where a pupil/student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relates to the pupil/student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

A relevant pastoral leader will liaise with the pupil/student and their parents to aid a smooth transition back to school. In some instances, this may require a part-time or modified timetable.

Modified timetables

In some situations (usually to support a pupil/student who is or has been unwell) a pupil/student may be put on a Modified (part-time) Timetable. This will happen as part of a formal process with a signed agreement. The Modified Timetable will be reviewed regularly and will be time limited. Where pupil/pupils/students are on agreed modified timetable, the School has agreed to the pupil/student being absent for part of the week or day and therefore will record it as authorised absence.

Monitoring and Addressing Attendance Concerns

The Piggott School collects attendance and absence data daily and weekly from the registers. This information is forwarded to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the Local Governing Committee.

This collection of data also enables us to identify those pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern prompting support and outreach for children or families in need. Where this applies, their form tutor / Head of Year or Assistant Headteacher will write to parents to make them aware of the concern. If a child's attendance does not show an improvement parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Head of Year and attendance lead, to agree an Attendance Action and Support Plan.

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 severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board 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

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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 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

For wider help and support with school attendance families can contact:

- The Attendance Team at the Local Authority: **Wokingham: [Click here](#)**
- Early Help is a service provided to families by the local authority to avoid situations escalating. The availability of provision varies between authorities, but it could be support from a Family Support Worker, Parenting Support, Youth Worker or Primary Mental Health Worker. Families can ask for help themselves or ask school to make a referral on their behalf.

The Education Welfare Service

If a child's Attendance Action and Support Plan fails to bring about the required improvement in attendance, the school may consider making a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service which works to support schools, parents and pupils to promote and ensure good school attendance and punctuality. However, the Service also has a statutory responsibility to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

When a pupil is referred to the Education Welfare Service there are various actions that can be taken to address attendance concerns. In certain circumstances, and in accordance with Wokingham Borough Council's Code of Conduct, Penalty Notices may be used to bring about an improvement in a pupil's attendance. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

The Fast Track Intervention may also be offered as an early intervention measure designed to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address school attendance concerns. Fast Track involves engaging parents and identifying what improvements and actions need to be achieved over a fixed time frame (usually 8 or 12

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weeks).

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates' Court.

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

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.

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). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

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.

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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

Promoting Good Attendance

At The Piggott School, we celebrate excellent attendance throughout the year in a number of ways.

- Attendance figures shared across the pastoral team and staff body.
- Class awards in Assembly on a termly basis.
- Individual pupil Certificates for excellent and improved attendance and punctuality.

Changing Schools

It is important that if parents/carers decide to send their child to a different school that they inform The Piggott School in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school; and
- A new home address, if appropriate, is supplied.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and after four weeks the pupil will be registered on the S2S website as a Pupil Missing Education.

Elective Home Education

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education.

Should parents/carers wish to follow this route, they need to put this in writing to the Headteacher with a request that their child is removed from the school roll. School will then inform the Education Welfare Service and arrangements will be made to monitor the education put in place at home.