



POLICY NAME:	Attendance Policy
Frequency of review:	Every two years
Reviewed On:	June 2022
Reviewed By:	Kerry Darby
Next review (date):	June 2024

The Pines Primary School Attendance Policy

1. Aims and Objectives – Our policy aims to

- Emphasise the importance to all students and families that maximum attendance at school is vital for achieving their full potential.
- Reinforce the notion that every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled and that parents are responsible in law for the regular and punctual attendance of their child.
- Make explicit to all (students, parents/carers, teachers) the schools' expectations on attendance levels and support strategies to help students maximise their attendance.
- Stress the need for home and school to work in partnership to achieve high attendance.
- Promote a consistent approach across the school towards attendance matters.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties linked to attendance at school and in the local authority.

The school sees **95% attendance as the minimum expectation** for all students and strives for all students to attend more than 97%. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and September 2013 make clear that Head teachers may not authorise holidays (or other Leave of Absence) in term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. The school upholds these regulations and supports the use of financial penalties and court action where necessary.

2. Procedures and Practices

Registration

Roll call registration (electronic) takes place twice a day

Lateness

Any student arriving in school after registration has been taken will be recorded as 'L' (late). If they arrive after registration period has finished they will be recorded as 'U' (unauthorised absence). At The Pines, registration begins at 8.55 and registers are closed at 9.10. Any child who arrives after 9.10 will be categorised as U (unauthorised absence). Unauthorised absence at the beginning of the day is particularly damaging to a child's academic and social progress and for this reason will be treated very seriously by the school and the EWO.

Absences

Absences from school will be either Authorised or Unauthorised depending upon circumstance.

Authorised absences are where a student has been absent and a satisfactory and legal reason has been communicated to the school via a form tutor, direct to the attendance team or whilst representing the school / educational visit. Other reasons include: genuine illness, days of religious observance, unavoidable medical appointments, exceptional circumstances (bereavement / marriage of immediate family member or traveller children going 'on the road'). The school expects authorised absences to be kept to a minimum and therefore routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours or during school holidays wherever possible.

Where absence through illness has led to attendance of below 95%, parents/carers will be expected to provide evidence of illness and/or appointments.

Unauthorised absences are when no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents/ carers or the reason provided is not deemed as acceptable by the school. Examples of these may be lateness after the end of registration, attending a birthday celebration, minding a house, caring for a sibling, shopping, lack of childcare, visiting relatives or going on holiday.

The school, using DfE guidelines, makes the final decision about whether or not any absence is seen as authorised or unauthorised. Parents who wish to request absence may do so by completing an absence request form (available via the school website) and returning it to the school office before the absence occurs. Authorisation cannot be granted retrospectively.

Term-Time holidays

The school strongly discourages holidays being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. The Pines Primary School follows the new DfE guidelines from September 2013 that stated that requests for long-term leave can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. No term time leave will be granted, or deemed granted without a formal request on the appropriate forms (available from school reception and on the website) is received and a written response given. Interviews following a request may be conducted prior to any decision being made. The school will not authorise any holidays retrospectively and may follow up any reported illness that we feel may have been a term time holiday. Full details of the absence request procedures are outlined in Appendix 3.

UNAUTHORISED TERM TIME LEAVE (includes Holiday): Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave of more than 6 consecutive sessions over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of previous unauthorised term time leave (more than 6 consecutive sessions over a 4 week period) taken in the last 3 years and evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice.

3. Strategies used to support and improve attendance at school

Students must attend regularly (minimum of 95%) and punctually (before 9am)

Parents

Parents/carers (or whichever adult the student lives or is staying with) are legally responsible for the child's attendance at school and must ensure that students attend, regularly, on time, in correct attire and with correct equipment. They could be subject to criminal prosecution should their child's attendance fall below acceptable levels.

We expect parents to;

- Telephone or email school on or before the first day of their child's absence to notify of the absence (before 10.00am)
- Provide satisfactory medical evidence when required to do so
- Attend attendance planning meetings when requested to do so with staff from school and the education welfare officer when necessary.

School

School will;

- Roll call registration twice a day (am and pm)
- Contact the parent/carer by telephone or text on the first day of absence if no notification is received.
- Monitor attendance when necessary
- **Use the 3 letter system** to communicate with parents highlighting absence and requesting explanations.
- Investigate unexplained absences **(if no satisfactory evidence is received within 10 days, the absence will remain recorded as unauthorised).**
- Hold attendance planning meetings to discuss how school can support parents/carers to improve attendance and to set targets.
- Include attendance information on progress reports
- Refer to the Education Welfare Officer when attendance falls below 90%
- Report all children whose attendance falls below 90% to the LA (as per statutory requirements)

The Local Authority (LA)

The local authority (Suffolk County Council) holds the statutory responsibility for school attendance for pupils in all Suffolk schools. Education Welfare Officers act on behalf of the LA to promote attendance and in partnership with schools, enforce attendance through the use of legal sanctions when necessary.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will;

- Liaise with schools to help identify children whose attendance is unacceptable
- Write to parents requesting their attendance at planning meetings, parenting contract meetings and Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) meetings as appropriate
- Hold planning meetings with schools and parents to assist with the planning to meet attendance targets.
- Carry out home visits when appropriate.
- Carry out assessments and broker supportive interventions from a range of external agencies such as the locality team (family work, youth support) when necessary.
- Request the imposition of legal sanctions such as penalty notices, parent contracts, education attendance orders and fines.

4. Additional information

Links to other policies

The importance of good attendance at school has a major link to other policies in school. The main policies that directly link or mention attendance include:

- Teaching and Learning,
- Assessment, Reporting and Marking Policy
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Inclusion

Useful Guidance and Websites

Further guidance relating to attendance is recommended to all staff, parents / carers and governors can be found in the following publications:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/pupil-attendance-and-welfare/school-attendance-and-penalty-notice/>
<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Appendices

Appendix 1 – School Register Codes

Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix 3 – Term Time Holiday information

Appendix 1 – School Register codes

The DfE offers a comprehensive set of register codes which all schools are required to use. These codes are as follows:

- /\ - Present am/pm
- B - Educated off site - Approved Educational Activity.
- C - Other authorised circumstances (including public performances licensed by the local authority, family bereavements, exceptional special occasions) - Authorised Absence.
- D - Dual registration (i.e pupil attending other establishment) - Approved Educational Activity.
- E - Excluded (no alternative provision made) - Authorised Absence.
- F - Extended family holiday (agreed) - Authorised Absence.
- G - Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement) - Unauthorised Absence.
- I - Illness (not medical/dental appointments) - Authorised Absence.
- J - Interview - Approved Educational Activity.
- L - Late (before registers close) - Present.
- M - Medical/Dental appointments - Authorised Absence.
- N - No reason yet provided for absence - Unauthorised Absence.
- O - Unauthorised Absence.
- P - Approved Sporting Activity - Approved Educational Activity.
- R - Religious Observance - Authorised Absence.
- S - Study Leave - Authorised Absence.
- T - Traveller child travelling - Authorised Absence.
- U - Late after registers close without an acceptable explanation - Unauthorised Absence
- V - Educational visit or trip - Approved Educational Activity.
- X - Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances.
- Y - Enforced closure – not counted in possible attendances.
- Z - Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.
- # - School closed – not counted in possible attendance.

Form tutors are only required to use a limited number of the codes. The attendance office, manager and attendance leader should be consulted before entering codes that are different to those on the default settings via the electronic registration system.

Appendix 2 – Roles and responsibilities

All staff - are expected to be excellent role models by having outstanding attendance and punctuality records

Appendix 3 - Information about Term Time Holidays

Term time holidays

Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to him or her.

When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided but is also less prepared for the lessons after his or her return.

There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available to use for holidays. Therefore every school day counts!

Key information

Prior to June 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed for headteachers to grant leave of absence for a term time family holiday in 'special circumstances' and for extended leave in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to these regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Your rights and responsibilities

If your child is registered at school you must ensure that s/he attends regularly.

The regulations make it clear that parents, carers or relatives do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term time holiday.

If parents take their child on holiday in term time this will be counted as unauthorised absence - this is the same as truancy and you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice.pdf (106Kb) (PDF document) being applied.

What you can do

Look at the school's attendance policy on the website for full information.

Speak to the school direct if you feel you need to take your child out of school in exceptional circumstances