



**Christchurch  
Learning Federation**

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy



## Attendance Statement

It is essential that children and young people form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that good attendance is maintained throughout their school career. The schools that make up the Christchurch Learning Federation are committed to working together to ensure that there is a consistent approach to school attendance. It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

The schools that make up the Christchurch Learning Federation have agreed the following:

- It is important that pupils are in school on time. Timekeeping is not only important in obtaining maximum benefit from education, it is also a key skill for adult life. Lateness is monitored by the schools and contributes to absence rates.
- The schools will monitor the attendance of our pupils and work closely with the Local Authority's School Attendance Service to support children and young people whose attendance levels are causing concern. This will include liaison between schools regarding siblings in more than one school.
- Whilst we understand that children do become ill on occasions, children who lose a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning. If a child's health continues to affect their education, schools are obliged to make a referral to the School Health Service to ensure that appropriate medical advice and support is provided.
- If a child is ill it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that they inform the school. The schools will operate a targeted 'Unexplained Absence' system, which means they will contact you to ask why your child is not in school and when they are expected to return.
- No leave of absence will be granted during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. For this reason, should you wish to take your child out of school for any leave of absence (holidays or otherwise) requests will not be routinely granted. It is essential that any requests for leave of absence are discussed with your child's Head of Year (or Headteacher in the case of primary schools) prior to the request being made in writing. Any absence which has not been authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and this has the potential to impact on your child's overall absence figure and could result in legal action.

**Further details of the specific procedures in place to support good attendance and punctuality can be found on the school website. The attendance and punctuality procedures can be found in the appendices to this policy.**

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

**Authorised Absences** include:

- Illness that deems a child 'unfit' for school.
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged out of school hours.
- Days of religious observance
- Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Headteacher

*Should a parent believe absence should be authorised but does not meet the above criteria it is vital that they contact the school to discuss the absence well in advance.*

**Note:** "Regulation 7 of 2006 Education (England) Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupils except where an application has been made **in advance** and the proprietor considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application." It should be recognised that the amendments **remove reference to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days.**

The amendments make it clear that a Headteacher **may not grant** any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### Unauthorised absences

All absence from school other than the above will be recorded as unauthorised.

## Responsibilities

### Students:

- Have a responsibility to attend school regularly, on time, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Have a responsibility to ensure that their lifestyle beyond school does not, in any way, adversely affect their ability to attend school regularly, punctually and in a fit condition to learn. During the primary phase this is a shared responsibility with parents.

### Parents:

- Have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Must notify the school in line with the school's Attendance Strategy if a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late. A student's absence will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation as been given.
- Should work with the school to support good attendance and commit to engaging positively with the school should a child's attendance cause concern.

**Schools:**

- Identify specific members of staff who will take responsibility for attendance. This includes from class teachers/form tutors who are required to take registers and follow up on absence through to pastoral leaders who will liaise with parents as appropriate.
- Identify a member of the senior leadership team who will take responsibility for the individual school attendance strategy and will monitor and report on attendance patterns.
- Will publicise their own specific strategies and processes regarding attendance to parents.

In addition the Headteacher/School-based Social Worker/Pastoral Care Worker/ Attendance Officer will have responsibility for:

- Overall monitoring of individual and whole school absenteeism.
- Contacting parents to share concerns regarding high level or inappropriate absences or persistent lateness.
- Authorising leave of absence on behalf of the governing body.
- Making referrals to the Local Authority's School Attendance Service.
- Liaison with external agencies such as Social Care as appropriate.
- Reporting to parents, the governing body and the Local Authority as appropriate.
- Making decisions concerning school closure in line with Local Authority guidance.
- Informing the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, following the Local Authority's procedures for a Child Missing Education.
- Developing strategies and incentives to promote good attendance.

**Governors:**

- Will monitor overall attendance figures.
- Will work with the Headteacher and staff to improve attendance as required.
- Will liaise through the Chair of Governors with the Headteacher about school closure.

**Local Authority School Attendance Service:**

- Fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular basis.
- Will support schools in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school. Therefore a pattern of unauthorised absence, which can include **taking holidays in term time**, can result in a Penalty Notice or further legal action, as outlined in the school's Attendance Strategy.

## Removal of a pupil's name from the school roll

Deletion from the admission register of the name of a pupil (of compulsory school age) is permitted when:

- A school attendance order naming the school has been altered or revoked
- The pupil has been registered at another school
- The pupil has ceased to attend and the parents have satisfied the Local Authority that he or she is receiving full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at a school
- Transfer of the pupil's ordinary residence makes attendance at the school unreasonable (i.e. he or she has moved to another area)
- The pupil has failed to return to school within 10 days of the expiry of extended leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday unless the absence is because of sickness or some other unavoidable cause and both the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.
- The School Medical Officer has certified that the pupil's health is such that he or she is unlikely to benefit enough to attend before becoming legally exempted from attendance
- The pupil has been continuously absent for at least four weeks and, after reasonable enquiry, neither the school nor the Local Authority has been able to locate the pupil (NB: this means that the School Attendance Team and the school must agree. One cannot act alone)
- The pupil is known to have died
- The pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and he or she intends to leave
- In an independent school he or she has ceased to be a pupil
- In a maintained school, he or she has been permanently excluded but only when the school appeal process has been concluded or the parent decides not to appeal
- Having been admitted to the school for nursery education, he or she has not transferred to the reception class

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 means that all schools now have a duty to inform the local authority in all circumstances when a pupil is deleted from the register. The only exception is when a pupil has completed their final year of education.

## Children Missing from Education

This refers to children who stop attending school and who are believed to have left the area without parents notifying the school and where the school has been unable to make contact:

- The school will try to make telephone contact.
- The school will write to the known home address.
- The school could make a home visit if appropriate.
- The school will make informal enquiries to relations or friends of the child and if the child has been missing, with no contact from parents or carers and no information as to where the child is for 10 days, a Child Missing Education Form will be completed and sent to the Local Authority.

- On receipt of such a referral the Child Missing Education representative in the Local Authority will complete checks to locate the child.
- The school will inform the Child Missing Education representative if the child returns to school.

If the school has any Child Protection concerns about the child it will follow the Child Protection Procedures and contact social care **immediately**.

## Employment of children and young persons

### The Law says:

The following rules apply until school leaving age. A child work-permit application should be completed by the employer.

*A child reaches the end of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the school year during which he/she becomes 16. A work permit is not required after this date.*

A child may undertake 'light work'. This refers to work that is not likely to be harmful to the health, safety or development of a child or to their attendance at school.

There are certain jobs that cannot be undertaken by a child under the age of 16. Examples of prohibited employment types include:

- to sell alcohol, except in a sealed container
- in a commercial kitchen (this includes washing up, unless the washing up area is separate to the kitchen)
- to collect or sort rubbish
- employment where harmful chemical, biological or physical agents are used
- in the personal care of residents of any residential care home or nursing home unless under the supervision of a responsible adult

### Hours a child can work during term time

During school term time	Children aged 13 and 14 years	Children aged 15 and 16 years
<b>Daily maximum (Monday to Friday)</b>	2 hours (of which no more than 1 hour may be prior to the start of school hours)	2 hours (of which no more than 1 hour may be prior to the start of school hours)
<b>Daily maximum (Saturday)</b>	5 hours	8 hours
<b>Daily maximum (Sunday)</b>	2 hours	2 hours
<b>Weekly maximum</b>	12 hours	12 hours
<b>Earliest start time</b>	7am	7am
<b>Latest finish time</b>	7pm	7pm
<b>Is employment during school hours permitted?</b>	No	No

### Hours a child can work during school holidays

During school holidays	Children aged 13 and 14 years	Children aged 15 and 16 years
<b>Daily maximum (Monday to Saturday)</b>	5 hours	8 hours
<b>Daily maximum (Sunday)</b>	2 hours	2 hours
<b>Weekly maximum</b>	25 hours	35 hours
<b>Earliest start time</b>	7am	7am
<b>Latest finish time</b>	7pm	7pm

# Appendix 1

## The Priory CE VA Primary School



# Attendance and Punctuality Procedures

Appraisal and Capability Procedures			
<b>Approval</b>	Board of Governors	<b>Chairman</b>	Sue Solly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Ruffle	<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date of last review</b>	n/a	<b>Date of review</b>	August 2018
<b>Date of next review</b>	August 2020	<b>Maintenance</b>	Liz Kelly

**Important Note:** As a Governing body, we adopt the CLF attendance and punctuality policy as laid out above. These procedures are to be read in conjunction with the policy and are laid out clearly in our prospectus.

## Registration

Children should arrive between 8.40 and 8.50 so they are settled and ready for the register at 8.55 am (at which time the school gate also closes). Please note that any child arriving after 8.55am will be classed as a **late arrival**.

Any child arriving in school after 9.10am will be classed as an **unauthorised absence**.

## Attendance

We continually emphasise the importance of good attendance and punctuality and we hope that you will work with us to strive to achieve 100% attendance for every child. Punctuality is also important as it can be distressing and disruptive for children to arrive after the start of a lesson.

## Absence

To ensure the continued safety and welfare of the children, it is essential that the school is notified of the nature of your child's absence e.g. illness, medical treatment, either by a telephone call or a note to your child's teacher. This should be done on the first day of absence between 8.40am and 9.15am.

Once registers have been completed, office staff will contact the parent of absent children who have not either telephoned or previously sent in a note explaining the absence.

Although it is very important that children do not miss any schooling unless absolutely necessary, they must *not* attend if they are unwell. We have set out our minimum exclusion period for common illnesses and medical conditions.

Common childhood illnesses/ disease	Minimal Exclusion Period
Antibiotics Prescribed	First day at home if a new antibiotic regime
Temperature i.e. 39°C +	If sent home ill, child must be off for 24 hours
Vomiting	If sent home ill, child must be off for at least 24 hours (recommend 48 hours) and must be able to eat and drink as normal before coming back to School
Diarrhoea	24 hours after last bout (recommend 48 hours) – the child must be able to eat and drink as normal before coming back to School
Conjunctivitis	After 24 hours of medical treatment or eyes remain clear
Scarlet Fever & Streptococcal infection of the throat	Until appropriate medical treatment has been given & at least 3 days from start of treatment



Impetigo	Until the skin has healed
Pediculosis (lice)	Until appropriate treatment is given
Ringworm of the scalp	Until cured
Ringworm of body	Seldom necessary to exclude provided treatment is being given
Scabies	Need not be excluded once appropriate treatment has been given
Measles	At least 5 days from onset of rash
Chickenpox	Until all spots are dried
Threadworm	Seldom necessary to exclude provided treatment

### **Regular Appointments e.g. doctors and dentists**

We encourage parents to make routine medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Of course, the school appreciates that are situations when this is not possible e.g. hospital appointments or meetings with specialists

### **Holidays**

We encourage parents not to take holidays during term time.

**If your child has an attendance below 96%, we will request via Dorset CC a penalty notice for any unauthorised holiday (see appendix 2 for explanatory letter).**

### **Attendance flowchart**

See appendix 3

## Appendix 2 Explanation to parents regarding penalty notices for unauthorised holidays

I have written a very detailed response about our policy which I hope you will find useful.

In many respects, the policy remains the same but, for the first time in a number of years, we will be enforcing it. Namely, the school will be **requesting Dorset County Council issue penalty notices for unauthorised holidays which take a child below the national expectation of 96%.**

### Why does good attendance (i.e. above 96%) matter for primary school children?

It is worth explaining the main reason for our more robust response to term time holidays. There is clear evidence in our school that poor attendance has a negative impact on attainment and progress. Our Maths teaching builds on previous days' learning, so if there are absences, then gaps will occur in a child's understanding. In English, children will be learning to read and write a text and again this is a sequential build-up of skills – missing days will result in disruption.

A stark fact from the Hampshire County Council's every day counts booklet (<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Everydaycounts.pdf>) states that only 35% of pupils with an attendance of 90% or below go on and achieve five A\* to C GCSEs including English and mathematics. This is compared to 73% of pupils with over 95% attendance.

Councillor Deborah Croney, Dorset County Council's Cabinet member for economy, education, learning and skills, has stated on record that: *"We would ask parents to consider the impact holidays during term time could have on their child's education. There is clear evidence that missing school can lead to lower academic achievement. Taking a child on holiday in term time can also interrupt the learning of the whole class, with teachers having to spend time helping children catch up when they return. One of our top priorities is enabling children to have the best possible start in life, and a major part of this is education."*

**Improving our attendance is a key action required from our Ofsted Inspection (March 2018) and one of the main reasons why we are not yet a good school.**

### Why can't we go on holiday in the last week of term, when the children have finished their curriculum learning?

I appreciate that you may feel the last week before a half-term holiday are often 'fun', but we are changing that culture. The week before May half-term we have our Summer assessment week. In the week before October half-term we have our parent consultation meetings. In the week before Christmas we have our nativity service and Christmas parties. Even in the last week of the summer term, we have our leavers' service and final open evening for parents.

### Why are most holiday requests declined by the school?

Amendments to the Pupil Registration (England) 2006 Regulations state that: **"Head teachers may not grant any approved leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances."**

The Department for Education has not defined exceptional circumstances, except to explain that: *"Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent/carer gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling"*.

Guidance from the NAHT (the Headteachers' union) defines exceptional as **rare, significant and unavoidable**. Headteachers are asked to answer this question: Could this request for leave take place during the normal school holidays? If the answer is yes, then it is not an exceptional circumstance.

#### Why is the school 'punishing' us for trying to book a more affordable holiday in term time?

I sympathise with the issue of affordability and the availability of cheaper holidays during term time, however The Department for Education is clear on this point. There is no parental/carer right for a family holiday and the considerations of cost, unique experiences for the child or overlapping with school holidays are not factors on which the decision should be made.

#### Will all unauthorised holiday absences result in a penalty notice?

The short answer is not necessarily. If a holiday request has been declined by the school, but the family still decide to go, then that absence is termed to be unauthorised leave. Should the total number of sessions missed result in the child going below our target of 96%, then a penalty notice will be requested. This will always be at least 10 sessions (or 5 full days) as detailed in Dorset County Councils penalty notice protocol (<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/pdfs/penalty-notice-protocol-2016-17-1.pdf>). A day equals 2 sessions.

So, for example, a family extending a bank holiday weekend by an extra 4 days during term time will receive a warning letter but not a penalty notice. However, should they then take a further unauthorised holiday of, say 2 days, then that additional leave would result in a penalty notice as it would take the child over the threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions.

#### Will I receive notice from the school if my child's attendance is poor?

In line with our policy, we will issue warning letters if your child is below 93% and at risk of the persistent absence category of 90% (regardless of whether these are for authorised or unauthorised absences).

For some unauthorised holiday leave i.e. a 2 week skiing trip, this will not be possible so a penalty notice will be requested without a warning letter.

#### When will I receive the penalty notice?

Penalty notices will only be issued once the unauthorised holiday has been taken and the attendance level has dropped into the 'below expected' category.

#### Will the school receive the money from the fine?

Dorset County Council administer all penalty notices and receive all the fine proceeds (not the school). They will respond to our requests for a penalty notice by issuing them direct to both parents/carers within a 10 working day period.

In Dorset last year, 563 penalty notices were issued.

How much is the penalty notice?

Currently fines are £60 for each pupil, if paid within 21 days, and £120 within 28 days.

Councils can prosecute parents if penalty notices remain unpaid after 28 days.

What will happen in April 2019 when the Priory School leaves Dorset and becomes part of the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council?

Our policy will remain in place as it is agreed across Christchurch schools. The administration of the penalty notices will be changed, but we do not have those details yet. Many schools in Bournemouth already issue penalty notices.

**Mr P Ruffle**

**Headteacher September 2018**

Appendix 3 School attendance management flowchart

