



Attendance Policy

Introduction:

Pentland Infant and Nursery School regards regular attendance at school as essential in ensuring the best possible learning outcomes for all children. Regular attendance at school is necessary to promote better life chances now and in the future. Our school's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. We aim for school life to be happy and interesting, so that children want to attend every day.

There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

There are strict Government targets and expectations on schools and parents to ensure the regular attendance of children in their school. There is a legal requirement for parents to send children to school daily.

This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

Our aim is to have an annual attendance figure of 96%, or better. We rely on our partnership with parents to achieve this.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Promoting regular attendance and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and school staff.

To help us all achieve good attendance for all pupils, school will:

- Give parents details on attendance in newsletters
- Report to parent/carers termly on their child's attendance if there are concerns
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously
- Celebrate good attendance by awarding class achievements
- Take the register twice per day, ie at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Keep attendance data in accordance with legal requirements and the policy of the school
- Make every effort to find out the reason for any absence in order to safeguard the well-being of each child

- Ensure that policies and procedures are upheld; the Governing Body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy

Pentland works closely with the Kirklees Attendance and Safeguarding Department to monitor children's attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure that their child attends school every day and arrives on time. This will support the school in doing the best for every child's learning and achievement and to raise the overall school attendance figures.
- Convey to their child the positive aspects of school attendance; be supportive and instil in them a good attendance routine.
- Arrange medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. If this is not possible, then ensure that their child attends school before and after the appointment. Parents are asked to show appointment cards at the school office.
- Refrain from taking leaves of absence during school term time.
- Bring their child to school on time and ensure they remain in school until the official home time, so that no learning time is lost. Only under the most exceptional and occasional incidences, will a late arrival or early collection time be approved.

The school arrival and collection times are as follows:

Year Groups	Start	Finish
Pre-School and Morning Nursery	8.45am	11.45am
Reception/Year 1/Year 2:	8.50am	3.20pm

Registers are marked shortly after the school day starts for each class. If pupils arrive later than 20 minutes after their start time, they are marked in the official register as late. Parents will be asked for an explanation, which will be recorded in the school's log of late arrivals.

Authorised Absences:

We can authorise an absence if:

- Your child is sick
- Your child has to attend a medical or dental appointment which cannot be arranged outside school hours
- There are days of religious observance e.g. Eid (if they fall within term time. A specified number of days only can be authorised)

Examples of absences that will definitely not be authorised include:

- You are taking your child shopping
- You want to take your child on a leave of absence
- If you want to take your child to the airport to meet or say goodbye to family

- If you have slept in after a late night
- You want to take birthday trips
- Your child is saying they do not want to come to school

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Tell school of all absences on a daily basis by phoning school (01924 451631) or emailing at office.pentlandinf.co.uk to tell us if their child will be away and why. Parents are expected to tell us when their child is expected to return to school.

School's procedure if a child is absent:

As a school, we have a strict safeguarding duty to the children in our care. Following up children's absence from school is an important part of this duty and one we take seriously at Pentland. We need to know that children are safe and that their whereabouts are known. Therefore, if we have not heard from parents/carers regarding the reason for a child's absence on day one we will:

- A phone call will be made to the parent/carer who is first emergency contact
- Failure to get an answer, will result in phone calls down the contact list in order
- If no reply to any of the calls, a text and email will be sent to the first and second contacts on the child's emergency contact list to ask them to contact school urgently
- If no contact and reason for absence is received, school will consider a home visit to be conducted
- If school remains unable to establish the reason for absence from any of the contacts of the child, and has reason to be concerned that the child may not be 'safe and well,' a welfare call by the police may be requested to the child's home address
- If there are growing concerns about a child's absence over time, school will:
- Invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation with the Headteacher

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the end of registration.
- All children arriving after registration period will be entered into the "late book" in the office. The reason for lateness is also recorded. Children who arrive late will be escorted to class by a member of the school office team.

If a child has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

Persistent absenteeism (pa):

A pupil becomes a 'Persistent Absentee' when they miss 10% or more of school sessions across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers' will be informed of this immediately.

Persistent absenteeism, without good reason, may result in a Parental Attendance Agreement being drawn up.

How we monitor attendance:

Our school office team monitor and measure attendance on a daily basis.

The weekly percentage figures for each class are calculated and discussed with the Headteacher.

The average percentage attendance for the whole school is calculated and recorded by the Headteacher.

Reports on school attendance are given regularly to the Governing Body and the Local Authority.

The school has a proactive approach to ensuring that children's attendance does not become of a concerning level. The following measures will be taken, to help work towards improving attendance, should a child's attendance level be deemed to be of concern:

If a child's attendance drops below 96%, the Head teacher will issue a letter of concern to the parent's and offer the support of the school to see if we can help in any way to improve attendance.

If a child's attendance falls below 92%, a letter will be sent to request a meeting to discuss concerns regarding attendance and to work together to improve it.

If a child's attendance falls below 90%, a letter will be issued to request a meeting between the parent, the Headteacher or Deputy Head. This is to help avoid the child falling into the Government's bracket of 'persistent absenteeism,' deemed to be those children that attendance is at 90% or below.

Attendance is also noted on children's reports; these are passed to the Junior School.

Please note: A school attendance improvement contract will be offered. Failure to adhere to the contract may result in legal action being considered.

An **Education Supervision Order** is heard in Family Court. If granted, the order is for 12 months with the option of renewing for an additional 24 months. The parent will be assigned a Supervising Officer who will oversee the order; and the pupil will be assigned a Befriender who will advise, assist and guide the pupil.

Prosecution is heard in Magistrates' Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and you will receive a criminal record. Additionally, other community orders may be attached.

The appropriate course of action will be decided by the Kirklees Legal Intervention Panel.

If a pupil has been suspended or excluded, that pupil may not be in a public place during the period of suspension/exclusion without just cause (such as attending a medical appointment). If that pupil is seen in a public place, a penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child. This is for £60 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.

Leaves of absence in term time:

Taking leaves of absence in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. The government has now made it clear to schools that they may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are the most exceptional of circumstances.

Parents/carers planning to take their child out of school for a leave of absence during term time must complete the Leave of Absence Form and meet with the Headteacher to discuss their decision before booking any travel arrangements. The form is available from the school office.

Parents/carers must understand that by taking children out of school they are making a choice to miss out on part of their child's education.

A penalty notice may be issued if the parents have not sought permission from the school before taking their child out of school for a leave of absence in term-time.

If parents/carers take their child out of school for a leave of absence which has not been authorised by the Headteacher or a minimum consecutive absence of 10 school sessions (this can be split over weekends or school holidays) they will be issued with a penalty notice and fined £60.00 if paid within first 21 days, increasing to £120.00 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. This is per parent and per child.

Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.

Alternatively Penalty notices will also apply should extended leave of absence extend beyond any period of time that has been authorised by the headteacher.

Each request will be dealt with on a case by case basis, but only in the most exceptional of circumstances will authorised absence be granted.

Parents must notify school if their child is absent and when they expect to return, even if this is an unauthorised absence. Failure to give a return date, or notify school of any unexpected delays in return, will result in a Child Missing in Education referral to the Local Authority.

Repeated offences of leave of absence may result in the matter being directly prosecuted in Kirklees Magistrates' court.

Religious Observance:

If you wish to refer to religious observance days, 3 days are permitted within a 12-month period where a religion other than Christianity is practiced and those days are specifically set by the religious body and the day falls on a usual school day. (Please note, pilgrimage or performing Umrah are not 'religious observance' days and are not considered reasonable cause for a child to miss school).

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

PLEASE WORK WITH US TO HELP US IMPROVE ATTENDANCE AND MEET OUR TARGET AND SUPPORT YOUR CHILD TO ACHIEVE THEIR BEST BY ATTENDING SCHOOL.