

**Pinewood School Academy Trust
Attendance & Truancy Policy Procedure**

Approved by	Learning & Development Committee	Date of Last Review	June 2023
Frequency of Review	1 Year(s)	Next Review	June 2024

What does this Policy cover?

This policy covers Pinewood School's expectations of attendance, as well as the procedure(s) that are followed for recording, managing & monitoring absences in order to comply with regulations and ensure attendance is high.

Why should you read this policy?

Intended Audience: Staff, Governors, Parents/Carers, Pupils

Key aims of this policy:

- To create a culture in which high attendance is accepted as the norm.
- Our aim is to have attendance as high as possible, allowing pupils to get the most of their school experience including attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.
- To demonstrate that high attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home, school and where necessary local partners.
To support families in overcoming any barriers to their Childs attendance.

Procedure

Role of the Governing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GB is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensuring that the attendance policy is carried out and reviewed regularly ▪ ensuring that the senior leadership team report termly on attendance. ▪ Promoting high attendance.
Role of the Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting an example of punctuality and good attendance ▪ implementation of the policy; ▪ agreeing whether an absence should be authorised. The power to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher and not with parents or the local authority – see Appendix A for circumstances under which an absence will be authorised; ▪ ensuring that there is daily monitoring of school attendance via the First Day Contact; ▪ working actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole; ▪ having clear procedures in place to address persistent absence; ▪ ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness; ▪ monitoring trends; ▪ a system for parents to report a child's absence; ▪ reporting to the GB the attendance figures and progress to ensuring high attendance; ▪ reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
Deputy Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting an example of punctuality and good attendance ▪ To deputise for the Headteacher in their absence, as above ▪ To meet regularly with the staff involved in pastoral support (including absence) for pupils. ▪ Review attendance termly ▪ To regularly present attendance data and actions to SLT and Governors ▪ Involve outside agencies if required to support individual pupils/families
Role of Department Leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Leads are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting an example of punctuality and good attendance; ▪ Implementing the policy; ▪ Monitoring cohorts of pupils in their department including vulnerable groups and individual attendance patterns; ▪ Informing parents/Carers when Letter 3 is initiated ▪ Initiating Letter 3 (see appendixes for copies of letters) ▪ Informing Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher and Attendance team of any concerns;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Termly reporting on attendance
Role of the Teaching Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ setting an example of punctuality and good attendance; ▪ implementing the policy; ▪ ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and lesson four and are accurate and up to-date; ▪ monitoring class and individual attendance patterns; ▪ Informing parents/Carers when Letter 2 is initiated. ▪ informing the Department Leads/Attendance of any concerns; ▪ emphasizing with children and families the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
Role of the Attendance Team (School Family Worker and Pupil welfare officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Attendance team are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ setting an example of punctuality and good attendance; ▪ Implementing the policy; ▪ monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis, including communication through phone calls and/or a home visit; ▪ ensuring registers are kept up to date; ▪ Liaising with Department Leads and Deputy Headteacher on progress/concerns within Pastoral team meetings and informing the termly report. ▪ Initiating Letter 1 and 4 of The Attendance Procedure and further correspondence as required; ▪ Liaising/consulting with Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) as required; ▪ Implementation of fixed penalties notices if needed. ▪ contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence; ▪ arranging meetings with parents in order to ensure clear channels of communication are in place and offer support/interventions where necessary; ▪ Supporting families if there are issues affecting school attendance e.g. mental health/wellbeing
Role of Parents/Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/Carers: <p>Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. Parents/Carers are expected to work with the school and local partners to improve attendance.</p> • Parents are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance; ▪ impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct; ▪ informing the school on the first day of absence, by 10am at the latest; ▪ providing the school with an explanation for the absence; ▪ informing the school of any changes to their contact details;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensuring that their child is ready for school transport on time ▪ taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings; ▪ working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance; ▪ avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours wherever possible; ▪ avoiding booking holidays during term-time.
Role of Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being ready for their transport/parents/carers, so that they arrive in school on time ▪ arriving in class on time; ▪ knowing the value of good attendance; ▪ attending school whenever they are well enough to do so; ▪ attending classes during the school day and not playing truant.
Role of the School Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School Office staff are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Receiving calls from parents informing of non-attendance ▪ Filling in for the attendance team where necessary
Encouraging Good Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School encourages good attendance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the GB; ▪ Awarding termly certificates for individuals with Outstanding attendance (95% and above) and Department leads choice. ▪ Requesting parents/carers and young people sign up to an attendance contract if there are concerning absences.
Dealing with Lateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The office staff monitor lateness and will mark the register appropriately; ▪ Should a pattern/regular lateness develop Tutors will contact parents and notify them of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed. ▪ Parents will be reminded that School starts at 8:40am, with registers closing at 8:55am. If a pupil arrives late but before registers close he/she will be marked as 'late' but will be counted as present for that session. If a pupil arrives after the registers have closed and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for the session (code U). ▪ Unauthorised absence will affect attendance data and the policy outlined in this document will be followed.

Dealing with Truancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a pupil is thought to be playing truant, then the school will inform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the parent/carer; ▪ the police. • All truants will receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ support; ▪ sanctions; ▪ discussions with the Attendance Improvement Officer to understand the seriousness of the matter; ▪ a programme of monitoring and support.
Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays during term time – Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If there are exceptional circumstances behind your request, you should discuss these with the Headteacher. Applications for such times must be made in writing – a form is available from the school office. • Religious Observance – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for recognised religious observance. • Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – please ensure these appointments take place out of school time, as far as possible, in order not to disrupt the child's education. • Unauthorised Absence: no reason for absence given by parent/carer. School will contact and try and obtain an answer by telephone. If they are unable to do this Letter 1 will be sent – if there is no response within 5 days from the parent/carer the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Copies of evidence for medical appointments will be asked for.
Fixed Penalty Notices	<p>Pinewood School follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Procedures. At Pinewood School we expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Headteacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.</p>
Monitoring	<p>We believe this policy will be effective only if we ensure consistency across the school by regular monitoring.</p>

Associated guidance:

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE – May 2022)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Mental health Issues affecting attendance (DfE – Feb 2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1136965/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

DfE guidance for parents

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/581539/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf

Appendix A

Absences will be authorised if:

- *The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headteacher.*
- *The pupil is ill and has not been asked to provide proof of absence.*
- *The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.*
- *The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.*
- *There is a close family bereavement.*
- *Leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).*
- *Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.*

Absence will be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from parents or if the Headteacher is not satisfied with the explanation.

Appendix B – Letters (copies for templates can be found in: shared/SEN/Attendance

To be sent on headed paper:

LETTER 1 – Attendance Team

N – No reason given for absences

(delete the above when sending letter)

DATE

ADDRESS OF PARENTS

Dear _____,

INSERT CHILDS NAME been absent from school on the following date/s _____. The school has a legal responsibility to provide accurate details of pupil absence. We have tried to contact you by phone but have been unsuccessful.

We would be very grateful if you would complete the slip below and send it back to us by return of post or with your child. If you have any appointment cards or letters would you please attach with the slip below. If we have not heard from you within 5 days. It will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

I would like to thank you for your co-operation,

Yours sincerely,

School Attendance Team

.....

Pupils Name:

Dates of Absence:

Reason for Absence:

.....

Signature:

To be sent on headed paper:

Headteacher: Mr David McGachen. B.Ed (Hons.), NPQH

LETTER 2: TUTOR

Attendance drops to 90% or below (persistence absence) (assuming no medical reason)

«date_of_printing»

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

Our records show that «chosen_forename»'s attendance has been «percentage_attendance»% for the term «state_which_term». Our aim is to have attendance as high as possible to ensure the child has the best possible learning opportunities. To put this into perspective, 90% attendance is equivalent to missing half a school year in the five years of compulsory secondary education. You are receiving this letter as your child's attendance has dropped below this level.

Ongoing poor attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success and could also affect future applications for jobs or college places. Many pupils have difficulty maintaining friendships if they have long or numerous periods of absence.

We wish to help «chosen_forename» to improve «his_her» attendance. If you would like to discuss «chosen_forename»'s attendance please contact myself on and I will be happy to talk with you and if required arrange a meeting.

We would appreciate your support to make sure «chosen_forename»'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

To be sent on headed paper:

LETTER 3: Department Leads Attendance continues to be 90% or below (no improvement since tutor's letter)

(Delete the above when sending letter)

«date_of_printing»

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

I refer to the letter of regarding **chosen_forename's** attendance.

Our records show that **«chosen_forename»'s** attendance has been **«percentage_attendance»%** for the term **«state which term»** and remains 90% or below, showing that there has not been a significant improvement in attendance. Our aim is to have attendance as high as possible to ensure the child has the best possible learning opportunities.

We are sure that you are aware that every school day counts and missing any time from school results in lost learning. We want to support **«chosen_forename»** and make certain that **«he_she»** does not get behind with work or miss out on any opportunities school offers.

Due to the large amount of absence **«chosen_forename»** has had, I must inform you that we will now require a doctor's note or appointment card in order to authorise any future periods of absence.

We will continue to monitor **«chosen_forename»** attendance. If you wish to discuss **«his_her»** attendance with us please contact me on I will be happy to talk with you or arrange a meeting if required.

Thank you for your co-operation and support.

Yours sincerely

To be sent on headed paper:

**LETTER 4: Attendance team
Attendance significantly below 90% or there has been no
improvement since Department Leads letter or no medical
evidence.**

**Meeting with parents
Possibility of a fixed penalty notice
Involvement from HCC
(delete the above when sending letter)**

«date_of_printing»

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

I refer to the letter of regarding **chosen_forename's** attendance.

Our records show that «**chosen_forename**»'s attendance has been «**percentage_attendance**»% for the term «**state the term**» and remains 90% or below, showing that there has not been a significant improvement in attendance.

Or (delete as appropriate)

Our records show that «**chosen_forename**»'s attendance has been «**percentage_attendance**»% for the term «**chosen_forename**» and this is a significant concern.

We have noticed the following reasons for absence over the time frame of the three letters you have no received: «**Give summary**»

I would like to invite you to attend a meeting with myself on at Here we can discuss how the school can help you to improve **chosen_forename's** attendance. At the meeting I would like to initiate an attendance contract between the School, yourself and your child in order to work together to ensure they get the best possible educational opportunity.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely

Appendix c – attendance contract**ATTENDANCE CONTRACT**

Aim:

- To Improve student attendance
- To identify any barriers why student is not attending school regularly
- To communicate and work with the student and parent/guardian to improve attendance
- Ensuring that the student and parent/guardian understands their role and responsibilities in the process.

Student Name:	Tutor Group:	D.O.B:
Parent/Guardian	Contact Number:	
Date of Contract:	Review Date:	Attendance Figure:

STUDENT

- Attend school every day
- Be on time for school
- Make up school work in school and homework at home
- Check in with allocated person/persons
- Attend all support interventions
- Ask for help when needed

Student Signature:**Date:**

PARENT

- Bring or send my child to school daily and on time
- Work in partnership with my child's school to improve attendance
- Notify the school office whenever my child is absent or on refusal
- When my child is ill or has a medical appointment, provide the school with a doctor's note, within two (2) days of my child's return to school, OR bring my child to school each day of illness, to have the illness verified by Attendance Officer.
- Ensure that my child obtains and makes-up any missed work and homework when he/she is absent from school
- Ask for help when needed
- I understand that any deviance of this contract may result in the parent/guardian or student being referred to Hertfordshire County Council and the court system.

Parent/Guardians Signature:**Date:**

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

- Communicate the current school attendance concerns with the student and the parent
- Work in partnership with the student and parent to support improved school attendance
- Communicate with the student and the parent to inform them of the student's progress

Attendance Officer's Signature:

Date:

COMMENTS: _____

This contract will be in effect from _____ to _____

Date of next

Review: _____

Points Raised at the Review:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.