



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This document applies to all parts of The Pilgrims' School,  
including parents and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage

**Reviewed by: The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Director of Wellbeing**

**Approved by: SLT**

**Last Reviewed: December 2025**

**Next Review: December 2026**

# THE PILGRIMS' SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 1. Policy Aims

- 1.1. We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including any persistent absence;
  - Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
  - Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents (or guardians, as appropriate to boarders) to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Policy Statements

- 2.1. It is vital that pupils are at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- 2.2. Good attendance is important because:
- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%;
  - regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
  - regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with;
  - regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
  - regular attenders are more successful in transferring between prep school, secondary school, and higher education, employment, or training.
- 2.3. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled.
- 2.4. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1 Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is a specifically authorised reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
- authorised absence is when the School has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or has given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
  - unauthorised absence: is when the School has not received a reason for absence, or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request.
- 3.2 The School will mark absence due to illness (both physical and mental health related) as authorised unless the School has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the School may ask the pupil's

parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor’s note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this.

- 3.3 The School can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented.

#### 4. Procedure

##### 4.1 Recording attendance

Legally, the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, and again for the afternoon session. In our School, the register is taken on iSAMS as follows:

- **Lower, Middle and Upper Prep:** AM Register taken by their class teacher/tutor from 08:10 to 08:20. Any pupil arriving after 08:20 will be required to sign in at the Front Office and will be marked ‘Late’ (L). Any pupil arriving at the Front Office after 08:30 will be marked as ‘Late After Registration Closed’ (U).
- **Pre-prep:** AM Registration opens at 08:30 and closes at 08:40.
- All Prep pupils are registered again for the afternoon session during Lunch 1 and Lunch 2 (Monday to Saturday). These start and end times for PM registration are as follows:

Day	Lunch 1 (Pre-Prep – Year 6)	Lunch 2 Year 7 and 8
Monday	12:05 – 12:15	13:00 – 13:10
Tuesday	12:05 – 12:15	13:00 – 13:10
Wednesday	11:50 – 12:00	12:45 – 12:55
Thursday	12:05 – 12:15	13:00 – 13:10
Friday	12:05 – 12:15	13:00 – 13:10
Saturday	12:05 – 12:15 (Year 4 – 6 only)	13:00 – 13:10

- Pre-prep pupils are registered for the afternoon session at the end of break leading into the afternoon session (13:15 Monday to Friday).

Online registers are printed weekly by the Front Office, retained in the office for a term, and then transferred to the archive room for retention for three years.

##### 4.2 Boarders

Boarders are also registered (outside of the school day) at breakfast in the morning, when a manual register is taken, as well as at supper. In the evening, the dorm list is used to confirm that all are accounted for before bed.

On a Wednesday afternoon, Year 8 boarders who have parental permission may sign out to go into town in groups of no fewer than 3 boys. Those doing so must sign out with the duty staff before departing and must sign back in immediately upon their return.

#### 4.3 Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons, and for children to be collected promptly at the end of the school day.

In our School, the school day starts and ends as follows (separate arrangements apply for boarders):

- Pre-Prep: 08:30 – 15:45;
- Prep: 08:10 – 16:40 (16:40 being the sign-out time for boys not taking a Commoner);
- Commoners for Pre-Prep boys run from 15:45 to 16:30 and for the Prep School from 17:00 -18:00. Pre-Prep boys either sign out at 16:30 with the Pre-Prep staff or join Supper Club. Prep School boys doing Commoners sign out from the window of the Year 4, 5, 6 changing room with a member of duty staff.

Day pupils may be on site from 07:55 to 18:00, with after school care available outside of these hours, from 07:25 to 19:30. After school care must be booked in advance where possible.

All lateness is recorded daily.

Ongoing and repeated lateness may be considered as unauthorised absence.

Parents/carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time-keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents/carers may be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support will be offered.

#### 4.4 Records of Absence and Off-Games (Prep and Pre-Prep included)

Absence notified in advance is recorded on the Weekly Notice, which is circulated to all staff. It is also recorded on the daily absence/off-games notice.

An absence not notified in advance is only recorded on the daily absence/off-games notice.

The absence/off-games notice is compiled by one of the nurses each morning before 09:00 and then circulated via e-mail.

If a pupil is taken ill during the day, the matron/nurse will add his absence to the absence/off-games notices. If the pupil is a day pupil, then the absence is also recorded on the registration/signing-out list.

The Absence/Off-Games lists are retained along with hard copies of the registers.

#### 4.5 Sign Out Registers

Sign out registers confirm that all day pupils have signed out correctly at the end of the day, or identify any who have not, in which case parents and guardians are contacted to ensure that they are accounted for.

#### 4.6 Reporting an unplanned pupil absence

A pupil not attending school is considered a potential safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

In the case of an unplanned absence, parents/carers must:

- inform the School as soon as possible on the first day of absence, giving the reason for the absence;
- keep the School updated if the pupil will be absent for multiple days.

##### 4.6.1 Absences due to illness

If a pupil is ill and unable to attend school, parents should email the [Front Office](#) before 0800 if possible, or call 01962 854189 between 0800 and 0830.

If a child is absent, and no contact has been made by parents, the School will:

- telephone parents/carers on each day of absence if we have not heard from them; this is because we have a duty to ensure pupils' safety as well as their regular
- school attendance;
- invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with relevant pastoral staff if absences persist;
- refer the matter to the appropriate Local Authority if the relevant threshold is met.

**Ten days' absence:** We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then we will notify the Local Authority.

##### 4.6.2 Dental and medical appointments

It is particularly requested that routine dental and other appointments be arranged during the holidays if at all possible. If this is not possible parents should inform the Front Office if special arrangements must be made during school hours. Parents may use the [frontoffice@pilgrims-school.co.uk](mailto:frontoffice@pilgrims-school.co.uk) e-mail address to arrange this if special arrangements must be made during school hours.

#### 4.7 Requests for leave of absence (planned absences)

Requests to keep a pupil away from school (other than for reasons of illness or a medical/dental appointment) should be addressed to the Headmaster by email, giving as much notice as possible. An e-mail should be sent to [Mrs Karen Pacey](#), the Headmaster's PA. Circumstances should be exceptional. In the majority of cases, requests for leave of absence to go on holiday during term time will not be authorised.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission, the absence will be unauthorised, and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down by the appropriate Local Authority, this may be reported to them.

#### 4.7.1 Absences to visit Senior Schools/Senior School Assessment/Senior School Interviews

Requests for absence for these reasons should be sent to [Mrs Karen Pacey](#) who will confirm the Headmaster's permission for absence, and inform those who need to be made aware of the absence for planning purposes.

#### 4.8 Penalty Notices and other legal measures

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

If a pupil:

- has accrued 7 days or more of unauthorised absence in a 12-rolling school week period;
- persistently arrives late after the register has closed;
- and/or has inappropriate, parentally condoned absence;

the School may report this to the appropriate Local Authority. This may lead to parents/carers receiving a warning or a Fixed Penalty Notice. More information can be found on Hampshire County Council's website: [Attendance guidance for parents/carers | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council](#)

#### 4.9 Sponsored international pupils

Where a sponsored international pupil has accrued 10 consecutive days of absence without authorisation, the School will report the unauthorised absence to the UKVI and sponsorship will be withdrawn.

#### 4.10 Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. The School will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.

### 5. Using attendance data

5.1 Pupils' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the appropriate Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. Any information sharing will be done in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

5.2 Every week, attendance data will be reviewed by the School's 'Senior Attendance Champion', in this case, the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Attendance data will be analysed to ensure that it is complete and accurate, and to see if attendance has improved, stayed the same or deteriorated. Where any concerns are identified, these will be shared with the appropriate senior members of staff.

5.3 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

## **6. Reducing persistent and severe absence**

6.1 The School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. These may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers should make the School aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, etc. This will help the School to identify any additional support that may be required.

6.2 The School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

6.3 In instances of repeated or long-term absences for the same physical or mental health reason, seeking medical evidence may be appropriate to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them to attend more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to prevent the child from attending for extended periods.

6.4 The School will implement a range of strategies to support attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils;
- Support from the Director of Wellbeing;
- Referrals to external support agencies;
- Pupil voice activities;
- Support with friendship groups;
- Time-limited part-time timetable (to be used exceptionally);
- Learning Support screening/intervention;
- Support from the School's nursing team.

6.5 Support offered will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

## **7. Responsibilities**

### **The Headmaster**

The decision whether to authorise an absence rests with the Headmaster.

In some cases, this responsibility may be delegated to other members of the Senior Leadership Team, including the Headmaster's PA.

## **Senior Attendance Champion**

**Our Senior Attendance Champion is Mr Craig Cuyler (Designated Safeguarding Lead/Director of Wellbeing). He will:**

- Oversee, direct and co-ordinate their School's work in promoting regular and improved attendance;
- Ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the School;
- Ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed;
- Ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties;
- Discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence if absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

The contact details for the member of staff, who is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our School are:

Contact details for the Senior Attendance Champion:

Mr Craig Cuyler

E-mail: [ccuyler@pilgrims-school.co.uk](mailto:ccuyler@pilgrims-school.co.uk)

Phone number: 01962 857619

Parents are encouraged to contact Mr Cuyler if any support is needed with regards to attendance.

## **Academic and pastoral staff**

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately;
- Promote good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities;
- Liaise with appropriate staff on matters of pupil attendance and punctuality;
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence;
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

## **The Front Office**

- Take, and if relevant, pass on messages regarding pupil absence received through either the telephone or email;
- Record information on pupil absences in the School's registers;
- Check the registers and contact parents/carers or staff with regards to any unrecorded marks or unexplained absences.

## **Pupils (depending on the pupil's age and level of development)**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised reason for absence;
- Arrive in school on time;
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time;
- Take responsibility for signing in and out if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

## **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting unauthorised absence from school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Make every reasonable effort to make sure that their children arrive at school on time;
- Inform the School each day of a pupil's absence, giving the reason for the absence;
- Request permission for any planned absences well in advance;
- Support their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year;
- Make the School aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school;
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments;
- Only request leave of absence if it is for rare and particular circumstances.

## **8. Cross reference to other policies and documents**

This policy is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, February 2024 (applies from 19 August 2024)
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance, DfE, February 2023.

## **9. Oversight**

Oversight of this Policy is undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team and the Pilgrims' Committee. The policy will be reviewed annually.