

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This section should be completed following ratification of the Policy.

Audience	Trust Leaders, All staff & All Parents
Ratified	May 2023
Other Related Policies	Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
Policy Owner	Executive Team & Performance Committee
Review Frequency	Within 12 months

Ownership

Preston Hedges Trust is responsible for the production and maintenance of this document. It is issued by the Clerk, catherine.gautrey@prestonhedges.org to whom any change requests or queries should be directed.

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1. Introductions and aims

At Preston Hedges Trust our aim is to make sure that all pupils attend school as fully as possible in the times regulated. We should make it clear that regular attendance and punctuality is essential for all pupils if they are to be successful. We give parents frequent updates on attendance matters and local issues that affect them. Our reports state the attendance record for each pupil, including absences and late attendances, ask for parental comments and extends an invitation to contact a named member of staff if they have any concerns.

Each school must encourage and assist all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality, reducing absence and persistent absence. It is important that school staff and parents are aware that good attendance is essential for pupils to maximise their achievement and attainment at school.

We pay full and due regard to “*Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities*” DFE May 2022

2. Legal Framework

This policy takes into account the Human Rights act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Section 6 of the 1996 Education Act and section 3 of the Education Act 2002.

A pupil is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A pupil ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

(A child is of “compulsory school age” on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday. Children becoming 5 years old between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st April.

Children becoming 5 years old between 1st April and 31st August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st September

Children becoming 5 years old between 1st September and 31st December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st January).

Under the education act 1996, The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for pupils of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was

: present

: absent

: present at approved educational activity; or

: unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

: School attendance Statutory guidance and departmental advice August 2013

3. Expectations

Every Parent/Carer should be aware of our expectations with regard to notification when a child is absent. All pupils should be at school at the allotted time ready for registration and any absences reported as early as possible. All staff should report any absences so that follow up action can be taken by the appropriate staff. If a child is not collected by 3.30pm a call should be made to their parents to establish when they will be collected.

When evaluating attendance, we use the terminology of Persistent and Severe attendance. This is defined as follows:

- **Persistent** absence refers to pupils who miss 10% or more of school
- **Severe** absence refers to pupils who miss 50% or more of school.

Where a pupil is **persistently absent**, parents/carers can expect additional targeted support is put in place.. This might include:

- Work with the LA on legal intervention where support is not working or being engaged with

- Intensify support through statutory children's social care, where there are safeguarding concerns

Where a pupil is severely absent, parents/carers can expect the school to take the approach above for persistently absent pupils **and** agree a joint approach with your LA.

The type of support your school and other partners can provide includes:

- A whole family plan
- An education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Alternative provision

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Parent and Carers

All Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed in full uniform and in a fit condition to learn. If for any reason a child is prevented from attending, parents must notify the school on the first day of absence before registration. If the school does not receive notification of a child's absence by the end of registration, the main parent/carer will be contacted by telephone that morning and asked to provide the reason for their child's absence, and giving an indication of when the child is likely to return to school.

A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been received from a parent/carer.

If any pupil's attendance is a cause for concern the parents/carers will be contacted by the Principal, another Senior Leader or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If this does not lead to an improvement in attendance, the school will refer the matter as appropriate to the education inclusion teams at the council.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (83.33%) over a period of six weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include:

West Northamptonshire Council Process

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine without further reference to you for a penalty notice this warning is valid for 12 months.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Milton Keynes Council Process

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £80 fine if paid within 21 days but after 21 days but within 28 £160.
- A second fine in two years starts at £160 which has to be paid in 28 days
- Third fine in three years will result in prosecution.

Parents/Carers should inform the school of any changes of circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.

Parents whose first language is not English or who have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren) if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

4.2 Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually in full school uniform. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support to rectify any problems.

4.3 School staff

All staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance including punctuality is the responsibility of all school staff and parents.

4.4 School leaders

School leaders will work in partnership with our parents and carers to resolve any issues surrounding absence or lateness to improve the educational opportunities and welfare of the child.

Each school must have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for improving attendance.

4.5 Trust Performance Committee

Will ensure that each of its schools fulfils its duties as defined in this attendance policy.

In order to achieve this, they will review the attendance figures against school targets at each meeting. This should include analysis of overall attendance, pupil premium attendance, late attendance, unauthorised absence and persistent absence at each school.

Where attendance is falling in one of its schools or below the individual school, objective, it will ensure Trust and school leaders take steps to swiftly address this concern.

Where there is an ongoing concern around attendance an action plan is implemented and reviewed at each meeting.

The committee will also review the Trust's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

5. Strategies to promote good attendance

Schools will use a range of strategies to promote good attendance. These include:

They will also:

- Actively promote and visibly demonstrate the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers.
- Ensure that with good teaching and learning experiences it will encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure trends in absence data and punctuality are analysed regularly by School Leaders. Concerns that arise are then communicated to the local school community, via newsletters and other means of school communication. This means that all parents are fully informed of the school's concerns and are aware impacting positively on the issue.
- The Principal will monitor attendance of pupils with less than 95% separately. Running regular reports to ensure that actions are taken to swiftly address their attendance.
- Leaders in the Trust's schools consistently consider absence, monitoring it frequently to identify pupil's whose absence is causing concern. Where monitoring identifies a concern, the school will investigate any absenteeism promptly, liaising closely with parents and taking appropriate action.

- The attendance of pupils in receipt of pupil premium will be monitored separately. School leaders will make every effort to ensure the attendance of pupil premium pupils is at least in line with non-disadvantaged pupils and at 95% as a group of pupils.
- Leaders will implement a bespoke strategy for each disadvantaged pupil with attendance below 90%. This will seek to encourage and reward positive attendance through an individualised approach.
- Where a pupil is persistently late regardless of time of arrival, contact is made with the parents. Where there are concerns that the absence and lateness links to a vulnerable child, leaders may make a Safeguarding referral sooner.
- When leaders in the school have taken all the necessary steps and there has not been an improvement in attendance or punctuality, the Principal may decide it is appropriate to refer the case to the Educational Inclusion Team or Attendance Officer for the county.

6. **Registration**

All registers will be taken within 10 minutes of school opening and immediately at the start of the afternoon session and then passed to the office for confirmation of absences with telephone or verbal messages from parents/carers.

Where no notification is received from a parent or carer, our Office Staff will endeavour to contact them to confirm the nature of the absence. Any concerns that the office staff have will be raised with the Principal, School Leaders or Designated Safeguarding Leads as appropriate. Any continuing problems with absence will be drawn to the Principal's attention to be followed up with contact of the parents/carers. Please see section 9 on Children missing in education for further details

7. Categorising absence

7.1 Illness

In most cases a telephone call/ message on the absence line or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable.

Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illnesses, or persistent absence.

7.2 Other authorised circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is a cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances. Please see the list below:

Allowed absence in exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Principal)

- Medical – Any appointment resulting in your child missing morning or afternoon registration
- Religious or Faith observance
- Bereavement/Compassionate
- Family Wedding/Civil Partnership Date (a maximum of 3 days can be authorised where the wedding is abroad, please see the website for further information)
- Family crisis
- Examination off site
- Educational Activity – Sport or Performance Activity
- Attendance required by another public organisation including a school
- Family relocation visit
- Other exceptional circumstanc

7.3 Absence not allowed under any circumstance

- Family holiday
- Family trips
- Leaving school early to travel to an event

7.4 Religious observance

The Trust acknowledges the multi faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends, and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Parent/carers are requested to give notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent for such occasions. Any pupils arriving ten minutes after the start of the school day or after the start of the afternoon session will be marked as late. Unless, there has been a problem with transport of which the school has been notified.

7.5 Applying for authorised absence

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completing the 'Trust Absence form' which can be downloaded from our school website.

The Principal will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time. Please be aware that the local authority has been given jurisdiction to impose fines for unauthorised absence and schools may be asked to report unauthorised absence. For absence relating to illness of five days or more, schools may request a doctor's note to confirm the absence.

Where the family are travelling abroad – authorised or not – the school may request proof of return travel. (Within Europe when the stay exceeds five days, every time during school time travel is beyond Europe). This will need to be provided to the school promptly upon request. This is more likely if you are travelling for an extended duration. This is a measure that we apply across the Trust to keep children safe.

All requests for leave of absence must be completed on the Trust Absence Request form.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, the school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the pupil will lose their school place.

8. Deletions from the register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies

- Permanent suspension has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

9. Children missing in education

Principals/ DSL/ DDSL must have a good understanding of the full guidance for Children Missing in Education.

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures as noted below.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Staff MUST report to the DSL/ DDSL, a child who is missing/ has unexplained absence swiftly and the office team are most well placed to do this if they become concerned around specific circumstances. Additionally, poor attendance, patterns of absence or persistent lateness should be discussed with the Principal to ensure that the issue is/ can be investigated.

In the event a child is missing, and further investigations do not satisfy the DSL/DDSL, we will follow the procedures in place for Northamptonshire or Milton Keynes as appropriate.

On the morning of absence, the office staff must contact the family. If there is no response, all other held contact details should be used to establish that the child is off (and safe). If no other channels of communication are effective by midday, the school must conduct a home visit the same day.

Reasonable steps may include asking neighbours if they know where a family is, (you must show your identity badge and always attend with another member of school staff). If these steps are unsuccessful, DSL/DDSL will contact the Police to request a welfare check. The Trust has this policy, in part, due to tragic events seen in the news where something has happened to the parent and then, as a consequence, the child.

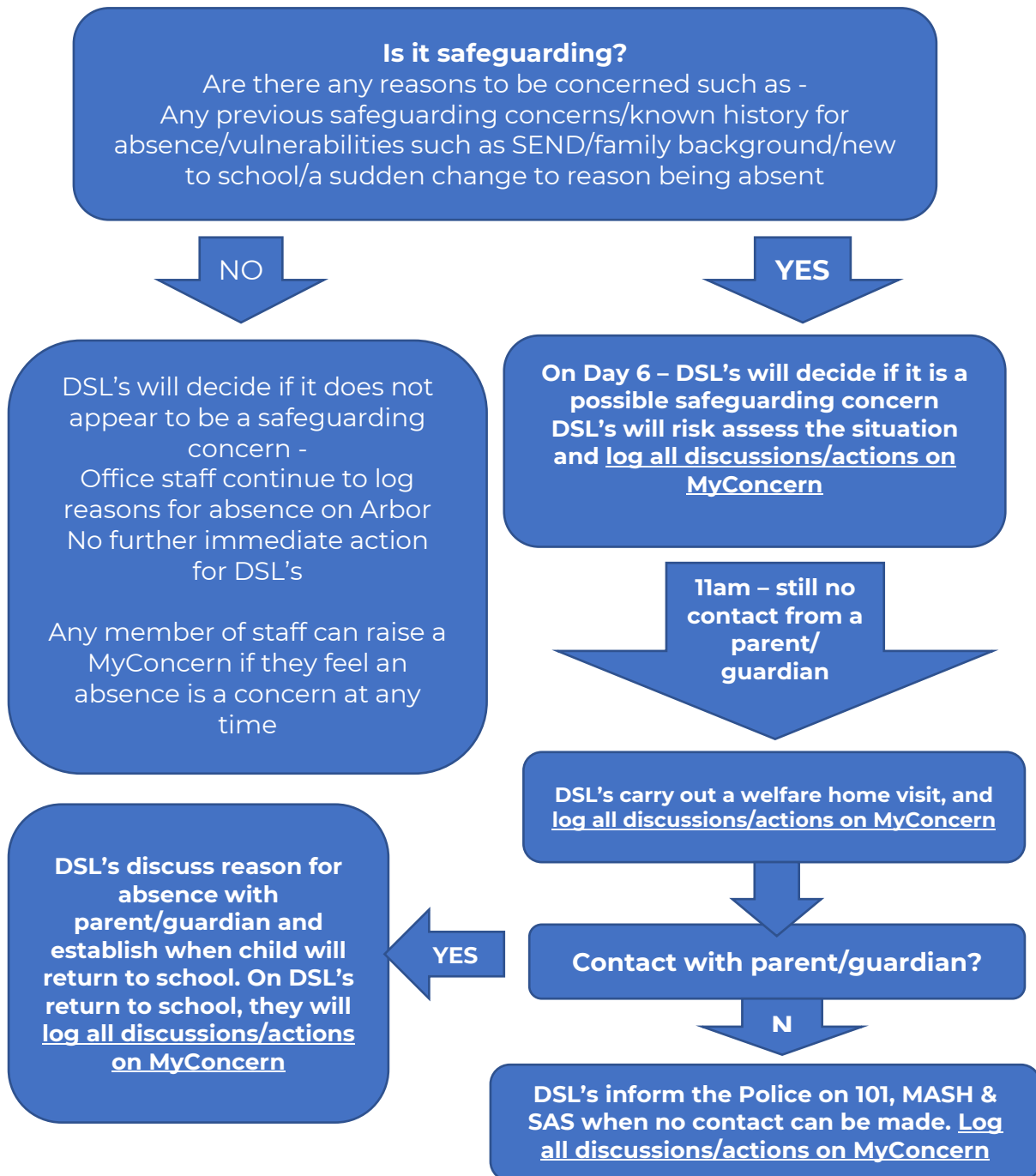
The Trust expects all schools to go beyond the legal minimum and take every step to hold more than one emergency contact number. KCSIE 2023 states that this is good practice as it allows a school to make contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing from education or if there is a welfare and/ or safeguarding concern.

The school follows the guidance for the removal of pupils from our registers. Additionally, we inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or at intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

10. Prolonged Absence Policy

When a child is absent from school, the office will log on Arbor the reasons for the absence as per policy, when a parent/guardian informs the school.

If a child is absent from school for **5 consecutive school days**, the office team will raise this with the DSL team. From **day 6**, daily the DSL's will then follow the process below:



11. Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority/DFE and other agencies if requested or if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

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

All information shared will be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2022

We will use data specifically to undertake the following:

- Monitor patterns of attendance and deliver targeted support to pupils and families
- Provide regular attendance reports to appropriate staff to facilitate discussions with pupils
- Conduct thorough analysis of monthly, half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends
- Benchmark your data against local, regional and national levels to identify areas for improvement
- Use your data analysis to devise specific strategies to address poor attendance
- Monitor the impact of these strategies
- Tailor your approach to your context, for example, focusing your analysis on the needs of particular pupil cohorts
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the Trust Performance Committee