Pippins School Attendance and Absence Policy

Introduction

The Education Act 1966 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The 'otherwise' includes home education.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations make provisions for the necessity of admission registers and attendance registers of pupils as well as the granting of leave of absence for pupils. Parents may not authorise absence; only headteachers or those authorised by the headteacher can do this. Schools may authorise any absence but inappropriate use can be just as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence.

Monitoring and controlling school attendance are a key part of Pippins School's objectives. We believe that:

• Responsibility for promoting school attendance is shared by everyone in the school.

• The attendance policy touches all aspects of the school's life, and relates directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.

• Rigorous collection and analysis of data about attendance enables the school to check its progress against measurable outcomes.

Attendance at school is a vital part of a pupil's education and has a heightened profile in this school with the headteacher having responsibility for whole school attendance as well as oversight of the school's pupil welfare system.

The Governors and Headteacher believe that it is important that the children in their care do not lose any schooling unnecessarily. In the primary phase, this places the responsibility on parents and carers to ensure regular attendance.

Schools have a safeguarding duty, under Section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

1. Objectives

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting good attendance so that all pupils can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence, by addressing the challenges to good attendance for each pupil.

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

> Acting early to address patterns of absence.

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

> Working with Slough Borough Council and the Attendance Officers where necessary to support good attendance.

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> We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

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- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Emily Manners and can be contacted via 01753 682937 and/or sendco@pippins.slough.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

- Working with Slough Borough Council Attendance Officer to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Rupi Hundal and can be contacted via 01753 682937 and/or office@pippins.slough.sch.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via Arbor.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

- Liaise with SLT in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

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Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Registers will be marked accurately according to DfE guidance document School attendance www.gov.uk/governmentpublications/school-attendance.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day. The gates open and soft start begins at 8.35am for Reception to Year 6.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 8.50am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm. Children will be marked late if they are not present when the register is taken.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school office staff (see also section 7) on 01753 682937 and/or office@pippins.slough.sch.uk.

We will mark absence due to illness 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 in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Leave of absence should be requested using the 'Loss of Learning' form available in the School Office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Persistent lateness will be identified using analysis of register codes and followed up by the school. This may involve parents being asked to meet with the Attendance Officer, Senior Leader responsible for attendance or the Headteacher. Parents will be reminded of their obligations to ensure attendance and a programme of support will be agreed if necessary. Persistent lateness may also be referred to the Attendance Officer at Slough Borough Council.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact Slough Children First and/or the Police
> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

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> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Attendance Officer at Slough Borough Council.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents whose children fall below 94% about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will usually take the form of a letter sent home with the child.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Under education law, parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. Term Dates are published at least a year in advance and parents are expected to arrange their family holidays accordingly.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off event which are unavoidable. Examples could include the death or funeral of a close relative, respite care for a looked after child or a housing crisis.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the School Office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

> If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Pippins promotes good school attendance through a class reward system and termly attendance certificates.

We celebrate good class attendance in our weekly newsletter.

Support is provided for children struggling to attend in consultation with the SENDCo and Headteacher.

7. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors attendance through the scrutiny of data at five points throughout the school year. Letters will be sent to families where attendance is below 94%.

> October half term

> End of the Winter Term (December)

> February half term

> End of the Spring Term (March)

> End of the Summer Term (July)

Families who are not meeting the expected attendance target will be followed up in the following ways:

> A phone call to discuss attendance

> A letter to inform parents or carers of the child's attendance and the school's concerns.

> Parents or carers may be invited to a meeting to discuss the concerns and any barriers to good attendance that the family may be experiencing.

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> Regular review meetings.

> Referral to Slough Borough Council Attendance Officer. This may result in a warning or penalty notice which may include a fine.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data daily, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level using attendance data to identify patterns and trends in absence

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

> Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to school staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school, and/or the local authority, considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

> Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Loss of Learning (Leave of Absence) form

Pippins School

**LOSS OF LEARNING REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE
IN TERM TIME**

**Term time absence will not be authorised except in
exceptional circumstances**

Parents should refer to the school's attendance policy on the website before requesting leave of absence.

- Term time absences are not an automatic right. Requests for leave of absence are given only in exceptional circumstances.
- Absences which are not agreed will be marked as UNAUTHORISED and noted as such on the pupil record.
- Absences will not be permitted during SATs testing weeks.
- Family holidays during term time are not deemed an exceptional circumstance. Holidays during term time will have an influence on your child's education and should be avoided.
- You must provide any relevant additional information, such as appointment letters or invitations and not make travel plans before receiving permission.
- Unauthorised absences and absences where a child fails to return by the agreed date may be referred to the Attendance Officer at Slough Borough Council.
- By requesting permission for your child to be excused from school, you are agreeing to abide by the decision of the Headteacher.

Absence from school is governed by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, and as amended, 2016.

If your request is not agreed, your child must attend school, or you may be liable to a fixed-penalty notice. Information on fixed penalty notices can be found in our Attendance and Absence Policy. In some circumstances, you may be jeopardising your child's place at the school.

CHILD'S SURNAME:	FIRST NAME:	YEAR:

REASON FOR ABSENCE:

START DATE:	END DATE:	Number of school days:

I have attached the following supporting documentation:

I have read and understood the information above	**Parent / Carer (delete as necessary)**
SIGNED:	**DATE:**

FOR OFFICE USE:	
Attendance %:	
Previous term time absence this academic year	Yes/No If yes – number of days:
Arrange to meet with parent/carer:	Yes/No If yes – date and time:
Request authorised	Yes/No
Other information	

Pippins School

LOSS OF LEARNING REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

IN TERM TIME

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

Name of child: _____

Year: _____

Having considered your application carefully, the request for leave of absence:

☐   has been agreed and authorised

☐   has not been agreed. The absence will be recorded as UNAUTHORISED.

SIGNED: _____

(Headteacher)

DATE: _____