



Paulton Junior School Attendance Policy

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1. Intent

Paulton Junior School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. 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 - It is the expectation that all pupils attend school **every day** that it is open, unless prevented from attending due to illness or any unavoidable cause.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled – High attainment depends on good attendance.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

1.1 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.

2. Implementation

Roles and responsibilities

The whole school community - Pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play.

2.1 Staff

All staff (teaching and support) at Paulton Junior School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 The governing board

The governing body of a maintained school are 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

2.3 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 and ensure attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

2.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school with the support of the headteacher
- 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
- There is a designated senior leader responsible for attendance.

2.5 The Attendance Welfare Support Officer

- The school attendance officer is responsible for:
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/SLT (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer can be contacted via Bath and North East Somerset Attendance & Welfare Support Service.

2.6 Role of Parents/carers

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Paulton Junior School.

- Ensure their children arrive at school on time each day, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.
- Notify Paulton Junior School on the first day of absence by reporting it to the school office using the schools telephone line (01761418137) 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
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- Contact the school without delay if concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Paulton Junior School will endeavor to support parents to address their concerns.

2.7 Pupils' responsibilities

- We expect that children will aim for 100% attendance. All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.
- Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

2.8 Class teacher and admin role in recording attendance

The school is required to mark the attendance register, twice each day, once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. The admin staff complete the registers in line with the DFE guidance.

- School starts at 8:30 All children should have arrived at this time.
- Registers will be taken in the classroom, by 8:40am.

- Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Children arriving after 8:40 will be marked in by the school office - **L**.
- Children arriving after 8:50 will be marked as absent for the whole session -**U**.
- Afternoon registers will be taken between 1.10 – 1:20 pm (a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.)

3. Categorising absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked U - unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate.

Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

ii) Paulton Junior School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Paulton Junior School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

- **iii)** If no explanation about an absence is received by the school, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore arrive and enter, at the school office immediately. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.
- For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.
- No child should be taken from the school site during school hours, without a member of staff being informed.

3.1 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

3.2 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the Class teacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Headteacher. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will contact his/her parents immediately.

3.3 Term-time Holidays

Paulton Junior School will consider every application individually, however its policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix), with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday. Paulton Junior School will **NOT** authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS Week

3.4 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

4. Systems and strategies for managing, promoting and improving attendance

- **Parent involvement is paramount** - They are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.
- **First-day calling** Paulton Junior School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage, pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to contact parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post or email.
- **Attendance reporting** – Attendance is discussed at parents' evenings by termly and reported formally at the end of the year.
- **Meetings with parents** - Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss

the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

- **Reward** - We also aim to use reward systems, displays and assemblies to promote attendance where appropriate

4.1 Referral to the Attendance and Welfare Support Service (A&WSS)

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Attendance and Welfare Support Service. The school meets with the Attendance and Welfare Support Service 3 times per year.

5. Impact

Monitoring and analysing attendance

At Paulton Junior School, we monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance, through use of SIMS. This allows us to monitor and track particular groups including disadvantaged pupils and share with appropriate staff to support and consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

- This will be done by the SLT and class teachers, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level to look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and to address these patterns.
- Attendance is monitored by class and by reasons for absence.
- Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE via the Local Authority using SIMS.net

5.1. Using data to improve attendance

Staff are able to access attendance reports on SIMS and facilitate discussions with pupils and families. This data is used to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

5.2. 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 this 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 local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school and provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

5.3 Fixed Penalty Notice

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter. The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so.

5.4. Monitoring arrangements

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

6. Links with other policies

This policy links to the Child Protection, Safeguarding and Behavior policies.