

Peacehaven Community School

Attendance & Punctuality

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Reviewed by Headteacher	Rachel Henocq
Chair of Governors	Patricia Metham

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Useful contacts

Senior Leader: behaviour and attendance	James Broadbent james.broadbent@swale.at
Attendance and inclusion officer	Marie Wootton pcs-attendance@swale.at
Report daily absence due to illness	01273 575832 pcs-attendance@swale.at

1. Principles

Peacehaven Community School encourages 100% attendance and punctuality for all students. The school expects all students to attend regularly and arrive at lessons on time, in order to take full advantage and access the full-time educational opportunities they are entitled to. Regular and punctual attendance demonstrates that the students of PCS have a strong sense of identity and value the learning community they belong to. Their attendance reflects their pride in PCS and the value they place on their learning. The rigorous and continuous drive to improve our attendance illustrates how we all recognise and understand the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

- Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.
- Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents or carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

2. Why regular attendance is important

2.1 Learning and Achievement:

There is a clear link between high attendance and high achievement. Students with higher rates of attainment have higher attendance levels in comparison to students with lower levels of attendance. We expect all students and parents/carers to know their attendance/absence rates from school. This can be found on Bromcom - MCAS and the Student Portal.

Evidence suggests that:

- students with an overall absence rate of 8.8% or more have a much higher chance of not achieving grades 9 to 4 in English and maths
- students with an absence rate of 5.2% achieved a grade 4
- the overall absence rate of students not achieving grades 9 to 4 was twice as high as those achieving grades 9 to 5 (8.8% absence rate in comparison to 3.7% absence rate)
- for the most vulnerable students 90% of young offenders had been persistently absent from school - attendance less than 90%
- 83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent from school.

2.2 Safeguarding

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each student is everyone's responsibility. Within the context of our school,

promoting the welfare and life opportunities for a child encompasses seven key elements.

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- SEND

Failing to attend our school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. This may result in a welfare check, Team Around the School and Setting (TASS) involvement or Police check being carried out. If persistent absence continues, this can result in a referral to the TASS or referral to external agencies (Social Services).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at Peacehaven Community School is Mr Verniol; if there are concerns about student wellbeing and safety, he can be contacted by email mat.verniol@swale.at

3. Legal framework

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent/carer is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

This policy has been created following the recent government guidance issued in May 2022. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, May 2022). The law on school attendance entitles every student to attend a full-time educational provision suitable for their age, ability and SEND needs. Parents/carers have a legal obligation to make sure their child receives that education by attending school. Where parents/carers decide to register their child at school, it is the additional responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure their child attends that school every day, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from school.

4. Rewards and incentives

Excellent and regular attendance is acknowledged by the school in assemblies and through our school rewards system (see table below). Students will receive recognition for achieving excellent attendance each term. The Pastoral team and Senior Leaders may also use extra-curricular school events and activities or trips to incentivise attendance.

0 lates in a week	A positive letter home, an email home praising the student for arriving to every lesson on time and stating how they were entered into our weekly draw for students who arrived on time to every lesson.
5 achievement points	100% attendance in a week. Students will be rewarded with 5 achievement points.
Weekly reward for being on time	Weekly rewards: students will be entered into a prize draw based on having 0 lates to all lessons.
Reward assemblies	Year group assemblies to reward students for attendance and punctuality.
Attendance badges - Bronze, Silver and Gold	Students will receive a Bronze badge for two terms of consistent full attendance, a Silver badge for four terms of consistent full attendance and a Gold badge for a full academic year of 100% attendance.
Yearly ACE events	Student will be invited to an ACE event in Term 6 to celebrate attendance success.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that students attend school regularly and are punctual. This will help to ensure that every student achieves their potential.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT). James Broadbent is the SLT member with responsibility for the strategic approach to attendance in school. The Attendance team will work to develop effective systems for tracking, monitoring and improving whole-school attendance.

The Attendance team coordinates the recording of accurate attendance registers and supports intervention for students and families where attendance is a concern. Members of the team will support SLT in creating and maintaining systems to improve attendance and punctuality and will provide key attendance data. They will work to create an ethos where

attendance and punctuality are valued by all stakeholders of the School.

Subject teachers and cover staff take a register within the first 5 minutes of every lesson. If the electronic register is unavailable, a paper register will be used and delivered promptly to the Attendance Office. If a student arrives to a lesson after the register has been taken, the teacher amends the register with how many minutes late the student is.

Personal Development Mentors monitor the attendance and punctuality of their students, noticing and taking action when a student's attendance is reduced or inconsistent. They are required to raise any concerns with the Attendance team and Pastoral Leader for their year group. They make supportive phone calls home on the first day of any period of absence to check in with the student and enquire if there is any information that the school ought to be made aware of.

Pastoral Leaders (PLs)

The PLs will support the Attendance team in their role. They will regularly meet with and mentor the persistent absentees as identified by the Attendance team. The PLs monitor the attendance and punctuality for the year group to which they are attached and work with the Attendance team to support students for whom attendance and punctuality are issues.

Pastoral Support Managers (PSMs)

The PSMs will support the PLs to mentor students who are persistently absent. They will support the Attendance team by following up on absences within their year group on a regular basis.

6. Attendance procedures for individual absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, not by the parents/carers, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required every day of absence, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (e.g. after registers have closed).

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in

resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS) from the Local Authority. The EBAS Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use legal interventions on parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Parents/carers must inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence, and on each subsequent day. Parents/carers should leave a message on the school absence line with a reason for their child's absence on **01273 575832** before 8:30am. They can also contact the school using My Child at School app (MCAS) or by emailing the attendance team on pcs-attendance@swale.at.

A **medical certificate** will be required if a child is/children are absent for **more than 3 days**. When requested by the school, parents/carers must provide medical evidence as proof of absence. If this is not provided, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Medical evidence is also requested where attendance has previously dropped and is therefore being tracked.

If a parent/carer has concerns over issues that might affect their child's attendance, they should contact either the Attendance team on the contact details above or the relevant member of the Pastoral team (e.g. Personal Development Mentors) so that the school can work with the family to resolve any issues prior to a referral to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service within the Local Authority.

7. Lateness to school

The school day begins at **8.40am** and ends at **3.00pm**. Morning registration takes place at **8.40am** each day and all children are expected to be in school and ready to begin their first lesson at 8.40am in order to secure a registration mark. After this time, they will be recorded as late, including if they are on the school premises but have failed to attend the start of lesson one without permission from a member of staff.

The morning registration is open for 30 minutes, closing at **9.10am** after which a pupil will be marked with a '**U**' code signifying unauthorised absence.

1st U-Code: the Pastoral Support Manager contacts the home to inform families that their child has received a 'U' Code; this is a supportive measure to understand the context of the absence.

2nd U-Code: a letter will be sent home informing parents/carers of the next steps, including the '10 in 10' process and the use of the fixed term penalty notice.

3rd U-Code: the Attendance officer will arrange a meeting in school as their child will now

be placed on the 10 in 10 programme, which if they fail will lead to a fixed term penalty notice.

All further U-Codes: all further 'U' codes will be monitored through the '10 in 10' programme and ESBAS involvement.

Truancy calls, texts or emails are sent out each day to alert parents/carers if their child is not in school and no absence message/communication has been left. This system ensures that we know the whereabouts of the students in our care. In line with our safeguarding policy, a priority call list of students is in place for those who fall into a vulnerable group category. In the case of any of these students being absent they are contacted before the register closes and, where needed, appropriate external agencies are informed.

8. Lateness to lesson

The number of minutes a student is late to lesson is recorded by the class teacher for each lesson of the day. A report for the accumulation of minutes late to lessons is run once a week and students and their parents/carers are notified of the total amount of time a student has been late. Students will be set a detention on Friday, from 3.00pm, with the length of time set according to the amount of lost learning time accumulated during the week.

The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance will ensure data is analysed and triangulated with other members of the strategic leadership team and school, including those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour and teaching and learning, so that a targeted approach is used for support. Support may be from school staff or external agencies and students and families are always involved in the process.

9. Persistent absenteeism

9.1 Persistent Absenteeism (PA) definition

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls to 90% or below for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child or young person's educational prospects and the fullest support and cooperation is needed from parents/carers to tackle this.

A student who misses 10% of their education will miss approximately 120 lessons per year or 600 lessons over the course of their compulsory secondary education. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority; parents/carers will be informed of this immediately and remedial action will be taken. Action will likely mean working with Team Around the School and Setting to put

support in place before legal action is discussed.

This may result in a referral to the Legal interventions at East Sussex for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing. This will be made following the TASS procedure. When a referral is made to the local authority, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents need to be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

9.2 Preventing persistent absenteeism

We will work closely with all families to support attendance and take the context and circumstances into consideration with each individual case which may be adapted from what is listed below.

9.3 Staged Intervention Process

Wave	% attendance	Staff	What we do
0	97.0% +	All staff	Reward excellent attendance. Call home on the first day of any absence to check in with the student/family. Record late to school/lesson.
1	96.9 – 94.0%	Mentor	Meeting with parent/carer/student Attendance target card issued with targets set Reviewed after 2 weeks
2	93.9 – 90.0%	PL	Meet with students in small group Letter/phone call home Continued monitoring with target card
3	Below 90%	Attendance team / SLT Link	PL/attendance team to meet parents with student in school '10 in 10' plan in place Plan, do, review completed Follow-up letter
4	<20.0%	TASS/JBT/MWO	Support from external agencies

A letter from the attendance office and/or phone call home by the Pastoral team/Attendance team will be sent for any student that is falling below 97% attendance, with an offer of an open discussion around the barriers students or families may have to attending school.

Pastoral Leaders & Attendance team meet with those who have fallen into the 96.9 – 94.0% category to discuss any support that can be offered (internal and external) and the student is put on a target card. If the meeting is not attended by parent/carer, the meeting goes ahead with targets set and this is communicated through a letter and a phone call by either the PLS or Attendance team.

After 2 weeks on a target card, a review meeting is held. If the targets for attendance have not been met, new targets are set within a clear time frame and parents/carers informed that they could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if there is no improvement.

If there is no improvement and there is enough evidence then there will be a move to pursue prosecution or Fixed Penalty Notice.

Throughout any stage it may be appropriate to engage with outside agencies to support students and families with attendance. Students with poor, inconsistent or decreasing attendance are discussed in triangulation with other leaders in the school as part of our safeguarding process.

9.4 Teachers can use these tips to improve attendance to their lessons:

- welcome all students – make them feel safe and valued
- use praise, emphasising the importance of attendance for learning
- follow up punctuality issues at the end of the lesson using an appropriate sanction where relevant
- give students “the big picture” about the unit of work
- integrate returning students and inconsistent attenders by considering key tools such as differentiation, peer support, seating plans and catchup material
- know who is attending and who isn't - find out why
- include in the plenary a taster to hook students in for the next lesson
- use one-to-one opportunities to acknowledge and praise individual improvements in attendance and relate to improved learning
- use the School reward system to promote the link between good attendance and effective learning
- ensure the student has access to any work missed during the time of absence.

At no time should any member of staff use negative language or sarcasm to greet a student who has been absent for some time, Although often said in fun, such negative comments

may have an adverse impact upon future attendance

10. Attendance Procedures for Requested Leave of Absence (including holidays)

PCS discourages parents/carers from taking their child out of school during term dates. The Headteacher will not authorise absence in school time unless in exceptional circumstances. In the case of an unauthorised holiday, ESBAS will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school.

If there are exceptional circumstances, a completed leave of absence form must be sent to the Headteacher a minimum of 14 days before the start of the absence. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the absence, though government guidelines are followed. Leave of absence forms can be collected from the school's Reception. The maximum number of absence authorisations possible is one per academic year, even under exceptional circumstances.

The Department for Education guidance regarding taking holidays in term time is very clear and we as a school follow this closely. Consequently, if you book your child out of school for a holiday of less than 5 days and subsequently your child is off sick before the holiday is due to start or has extra days off after the holiday finishes, we will ask for a copy of the holiday booking or a doctor's certificate, to confirm either the holiday dates or the child's sickness. Failure to produce this evidence will result in the School referring the family to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service with the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice. Please be aware that the School can also issue a Fixed Penalty Notice independently.

11. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the School Attendance Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) with the most recent publication being issued in May 2022, the DfE's Statutory Guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures, and refers to the DfE's Guidance on the School Census which explains the persistent absence threshold. These are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996 The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Anti-social behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Parenting Contract and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Sentencing Act (2020) The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (2007)

Appendices

Present marks

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Students are present at morning registration.
\	Present (pm)	Students are present at afternoon registration.
L	Late Arrival	Students arrive late before the register has closed.
B	Off-site activity educational	Students are at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
J	Interview	Students have an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity	Students are participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Education trip or visit	Students are on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school.
W	Work Experience	The student is on a work experience placement.

Authorised Absence

C	Authorised Leave of Absence	The student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
E	Suspended	Students have been suspended but no alternative provision has been made.
H	Authorised Holiday	Students have been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances.

I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness.
M	Medical/Dental Appointment	Students are at a medical or dental appointment.
R	Religious Observance	Students are taking part in a day of religious observance.
S	Study Leave	A Year 11 student is on study leave during their GCSEs.
T	Traveller Absence	Students from a Traveller community are travelling, as agreed with the school. If their attendance is a concern, the school will request for evidence to be submitted.

Unauthorised Absence

G	Unauthorised holiday	The student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school.
N	Reason not provided	The student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when a valid reason emerges).
O	Unauthorised absence	The School is not satisfied with the reason for the student's absence.
U	Arrival after registration	Students arrived at school after the register has closed.