



Pendle Community High School & College Whole School Policy for Attendance

Rationale

The purpose of this document is to set out Pendle Community High School & College's policy and procedure on attendance.

Pendle Community High School sees attendance intervention as a supportive measure. It is a high expectation of Ofsted, the Local Authority, and the Government that a school, and its governing body, do everything they can to improve and maintain good attendance. It is an important point that the expectations given to special schools are the same as those given to mainstream schools. Nevertheless, it is also understood that some pupils will never be able to reach these expectations due to complex or chronic medical needs. Even so, school will still do everything it can to engage with these pupils and promote the best attendance possible.

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.

Aims

At Pendle Community High School and College, 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 a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Making attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school; including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- Further developing positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Setting targets to improve individual and whole school attendance levels, including statutory targets.

Attendance Mission Statement

At Pendle Community High School and College we will:

- Ensure that all of its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each individual to realise his/her true potential.
- Strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each individual feels a sense of purpose, belonging, value, achievement and security.
- Continually engage with students and their families to ensure each student attends school & college regularly and punctually.
- Establish an effective, efficient communication system to provide guidance, advice and support to students and parents/ carers in relation to all attendance related matters.
- At all stages of improving attendance we will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

At Pendle Community High School and College, we have a procedural framework which includes specific guidance in relation to supporting regular and punctual attendance. The procedural framework defines agreed roles and responsibilities for:

- Parents and Carers
- Students
- School Staff
- Governors

This procedural framework also includes guidance on:

- Registration
- Punctuality
- What constitutes unauthorised absence
- Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for students
- Systems for dealing with absence
- Criteria and systems for referral to and working with LCC School Attendance Team
- Systems for monitoring whole school attendance and action planning
- Holidays in Term Time / Extended Leave

Leave of Absence

Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, schools cannot authorise any leave other than in exceptional circumstances. At PCHS & C the Senior Leadership Team (i.e. Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteachers) are the people authorised by the governing body to make this decision. If the leave is being requested for a holiday, approval should be obtained prior to making any bookings.

Pendle Community High School and College actively discourages the taking of any holidays in term time. Any parents/ carers who wish to take leave of absence during term time (other than those related to specialist respite care), must formally request permission in writing from the Headteacher (via the request form obtained from the School Office). For **'exceptional reasons'** only (e.g. a family bereavement), absence **may** be approved during term time of up to ten school days in any school year.

Pendle Community High School and College will authorise one day's leave per religious festival e.g. EID, but no more than 3 days in one academic year, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/ carers must request this leave of absence in advance unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Use of Penalty Notices

Pendle Community High School and College will (*unless there are exceptional circumstances*) request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence. This includes Leave of Absences which are taken without a prior request and those taken after a prior request has been made where parents have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised. Generally, up to 4 and a half days (9 sessions) unauthorised absence would not trigger a fine. However, 5 or more full days (10 sessions), unless exceptional circumstances e.g. going abroad for specialist medical treatment not available in this country, will trigger a fine. Pendle Community High School and College will also request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice for days taken in excess of the agreed period of leave without good reason, (once again unless exceptional circumstances are evident).

The Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes will come into effect on **19 August 2024**. The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.

- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence

- Persistent absence is where a pupil misses **10%** or more of school
- Severe absence is where a pupil misses **50%** or more of school.

The minimum attendance level which is expected by all students nationally is 95%. If an attendance falls below this level the school will consider whether it is appropriate to offer support in order to improve the situation or to make an allowance for exceptional circumstances i.e. ill health or particular special needs applicable to the named student.

Both local and central government pay particular attention to reducing the number of students who fall into the persistent absence category (PA). A student becomes a persistent absentee when their attendance falls below 90% at any point during the school year; whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. When attendance nears this level, a child will miss significant amounts of schooling and their education progress may be put at risk. We need parents' full support in ensuring that attendance does not reach this level. The school recognises that a percentage of pupils have a higher absence level due to complex medical conditions and consequently will not be referred. However, if for any other reason a child's attendance does fall into this category, parents will be asked to work with us to create action plans to improve the situation.

Families will be supported to improve the attendance of their child by the school's senior leadership team and direct support from the Family Liaison officer or if appropriate, the school nurse. Support will explore all reasons for low attendance and may include direct work with the pupil using the Emotionally Based School Avoidance toolkit. The support may involve the need for parents, and children of an appropriate age / developmental stage, to agree to a parenting contract. Due to the seriousness of PA and severe attendance status it is highly likely that such cases will be referred to a LCC attendance officer in the Attendance Team. All absence (including persistent absenteeism) is reported to LCC through the termly 'census'.

Truancy

Truancy is being absent for any part of the day without permission or authorised reason. In addition to regular attendance, Pendle Community High School and College staff are concerned about each student's safety, welfare and happiness. Therefore, in the unlikely event that there is a concern that a young person might be truanting, parents/ carers will be contacted immediately by phone. Parents/ carers are then actively encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Assistant Headteacher will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the Form/ College Tutor and appropriate action is taken. If this support does not improve the truancy with immediate effect, clear bespoke plans will be negotiated and agreed between the student, parent/carer and Assistant Headteacher/ Headteacher. A pupil's truancy may come to light through a Truancy Sweep, which is a joint operation undertaken by the Police and Lancashire County Council.

Children Missing from Education

A child missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect. The following guidance is therefore adopted by PCHS&C – based directly from Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2016.

PCHS&C will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, pastoral staff will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

If pupils have missed ten school days or more without permission, and/or pupils' have ongoing significant poor attendance, PCHS&C will inform Lancashire County Council. A pupil can only be removed from the register after authorisation from LCC other than circumstances covered by Regulation 8: 1 a, i or m.

Partnership Working

Pendle Community High School and College will work with LCC School Attendance Team, and other support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school. This may include social care, health or the Police.

Promotion of Good Attendance

At Pendle Community High School & College we believe that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning and progress. We will encourage excellent attendance for all our students, by offering a broad, balanced, relevant, stimulating and personalised curriculum, within a supportive and caring environment. Through this provision we strive for all our students to lead a happy and fulfilled life, which maximises all future opportunities.

In addition to the curriculum, PCHS&C also conducts individual and small group intervention work such as THRIVE, that supports pupils' welfare in other various ways. As these interventions are used to improve the education experience pupils have in school, they too, will also have the benefit of supporting attendance.

Attendance recognition occurs regularly through weekly reward assemblies, and termly attendance rewards. Sensitivity is given to pupils who, through serious medical conditions cannot hope to attend 100% of school, so rewards and recognitions is geared towards individual aspirations and expectations (whether this is 100% or another personal target). All targets for pupils, however, are aspirational and always geared towards attending school every day.

Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning

Pendle Community High School and College use electronic systems (SIMS) for monitoring attendance at both individual student and whole school level, and will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future action planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters. In addition to the follow up of absences on a daily basis, attendance is monitored weekly by the Assistant Headteacher. Attendance issues are discussed and actions planned as part of safeguarding supervision between the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and School Nurse.

PCHS&C will issue termly attendance letters to all families. These letters will be based on a traffic light system where;

- **Green** indicates attendance in the range of 100% - 95%, no intervention required.
- **Amber** indicates attendance in the range of 94% - 90%, low level interventions and support offered.
- **Red** indicates attendance less than 90%, persistent absence, higher level interventions and support required, possibly including referral to LCC School Attendance Team.

Whole School Attendance Policy Procedural Framework

This section of the document forms part of PCHS & C's Whole School Attendance Policy. It sets out the rights, roles and responsibilities for parents/ carers; students, school staff and Governors, and the systems and procedures in place to identify how the school will deliver its aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance. It will be reviewed annually.

PCHS & C believes that it is important that Parents and Carers, Pupils, School Staff and Governors all work in partnership to encourage good attendance for all pupils. Commitment to our successful partnership is dependent on an effective, efficient system of communication; realistic expectations, mutual respect; trust and cooperation.

The following is a summary of the rights, roles and responsibilities for individual groups of stakeholders.

Parent/ Carers(s) are expected to:

- Provide updated contact details and provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Contact school/ college by telephone (01282682260), email (attendance@pchs.lancs.sch.uk) or parent app message by 8.15am on the first day their child is absent and with a clear reason for absence
- Promptly return reply slips attached to letters sent home
- Follow the procedures for requests for Extended Leave of Absence
- Attend school events, meetings (including Annual Reviews) and parents' evenings
- Attempt to make medical appointments (e.g. dentist, doctors etc) out of school hours.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school/ college regularly and punctually
- Wear the correct school uniform or appropriate clothing for college.
- Be a positive member of the school/ college community
- Make the most of the opportunities school/ college has to offer

Pupils and parent(s) can expect school to:

- Have in place an accurate and efficient system for recording absence
- Have designated staff who initiate/ follow up enquiries if a student is absent without known cause
- Offer appointments to discuss/follow up areas of concern
- Treat information confidentially and with respect i.e. shared only on a 'need to know basis'
- Actively encourage and reward regular attendance and punctuality
- Advise, assist and support students and their families; enlisting the professional help of other agencies if and when required
- Keep students and parents/carers aware of progress

Class / Form Teams are expected to:

- Complete the morning and afternoon session registers within the agreed time frame (8.40am-9.10am and 12.50pm – 1.20pm)
- Use the appropriate symbols to record absence in line with LA Policy and as stipulated in the register procedure
- Contact the DSL/DDSL directly if they have any concerns about attendance.

The School Pastoral or Admin Teams are expected to:

- Initiate the Day of Absence Response (DAR) by making contact with Parent/ Carers on the first day of absence if no information has been received (see appendix A)
- Use the appropriate symbols to record absence in line with LA Policy and as stipulated in the register procedure
- Keep accurate records to assist with the collection of absence data
- Contact the DSL/DDSL directly if they have any concerns about attendance.
- Circulate information to the Assistant Headteacher / DSL / DDSL and the Class Team by email or if appropriate a Record of Discussion.
- Issue half termly 'traffic light' attendance letters to all families.
- Provide with each Annual Review 'an Attendance Register'

Assistant Headteacher is the attendance lead (and DSL) and is expected to:

- Take the lead for attendance across the school / college- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis – monitor, analyse and provide reports from attendance data
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Ensure targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Regularly liaise with the Local Authority concerning attendance issues
- Ensure there has been contact with parents/ carers if the reasons are not known for a student's absence and the absence has been for more than 3 consecutive days

- Assist the administrative staff with the compilation of attendance data
- Monitor registers regularly to ensure they have been completed correctly
- Report attendance concerns to the Headteacher
- Meet with parents regarding attendance concerns

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Claire Endersby and she can be contacted via the school office or cendersby@pchs.lancs.sch.uk

Headteacher is expected to:

- Actively promote the high importance of attendance with parents/ carers and students from non-prejudicial visits and from transitional meetings onwards, and regularly throughout their education.
- Develop and implement agreed policies
- Encourage inter-agency and parental participation in supporting pupils to gain maximum benefit from the educational system
- Be kept informed about attendance issues
- Reinforce positive attendance through the awarding of prizes and rewards throughout the school year.
- Oversee the School Attendance Policy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and report to Governor(s) on a termly basis
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

Governors are expected to:

- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
- Attend Governors’ Meetings - Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data, monitoring attendance figures for the whole school, report attendance issues to the Full Governing Board
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance, holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Liaise with Headteacher re attendance - making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Discuss attendance issues and devise improvement strategies during School Effective Sub Committee meetings (SESC)
- Attend meetings with parents to discuss attendance, if required
- Attend prize-giving ceremonies



Related policies and procedures

This attendance Policy should be read in conjunction with the following procedures and policies: -

Register Procedure

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Positive relationships, behaviour and SEMH policy

Policy approved by governors:	November 2024
Review Date:	October 2025
Signed: T Ashton, Chair of Governors	
Signed: D Grogan, Head Teacher	



Pendle Community High School & College
Appendix A: Absence response flowchart

