PORTER CROFT
Church of England Primary Academy

Whole School Attendance and Inclusion Policy
Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy: **Headteacher**
Nominated Committee of Governing Body Responsible for the policy: **Premises, Behaviour and Safeguarding and Mental Health Committee**
Date written: **June 2019** **Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body :** **September 2019** **Date Reviewed** **May 2023** **May 2024** **November 2025** **November 2026** **Date of next review:** **November 2027**
This policy will be reviewed every year, in line with government guidance and following any concerns and / or updates to National and Local guidance or procedures

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Whole School Attendance and Inclusion Policy

All school staff at Porter Croft Church of England Primary School strive to make the school day an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for all children. School attendance is crucial as the school is dedicated to maximising the achievement of all children. Regular attendance and good punctuality are vital to educational achievement and social integration. To support regular attendance this school will work in partnership with the children, parents / carers and all stakeholders.

Establishing good habits from the start helps children adapt to the daily routines of their school day, and the familiarity of school life.

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**

Aims

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**
- **Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence**
- **Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled**
- **Acting early to address patters 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 school.**

The school aim is for children to achieve and flourish, feel safe and happy, and to be confident to succeed to the best of their ability. A child who fails to attend primary school will be more likely to be poor attenders at secondary school. Establishing the value of education at an early age with parents / carers and children can be beneficial in later life, having a positive effect on self – esteem, behaviour and achievement.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The governing body 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**

Link Governor for attendance – Claire Dawson – will meet termly as part of the Premises, Behaviour and Safeguarding meetings, with the Attendance Champion and attendance officer to discuss termly attendance figures and plans.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for

- **Implementation of this policy**
- **Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors**
- **Supporting staff with monitoring of attendance of individual pupils**
- **Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies**
- **Meeting with parents to discuss escalated attendance issues**

SLT Attendance Champion

The school SLT Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- **Leading attendance across the school**
- **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 Cath Thomas and can be contacted via telephone on 0114 2662132 or email headteacher@portercroft.sheffield.sch.uk

Attendance 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**
- **Identifying children whose attendance is a cause for concern**
- **Initial meetings with parents re attendance issues**
- **Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices**

The attendance officer is Sarah Moxon and can be contacted via telephone on 0114 2662132 or email s.moxon@portercroft.sheffield.sch.uk

Class Teachers

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

Administration Staff

School Admin staff will:

- **Take calls from parents about absence on a day to day basis and record these on SIMS**
- **Contact parents on the first day of absence – either by telephone or text**
- **Check all registers after being submitted by class teachers to ensure all marks are recorded correctly**

Parents / Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- **Make sure their child attends every day and on time**
- **Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day, 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.**

Pupils
Pupils are expected to:

- **Attend school every day and on time**

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

We will take the register at the start of the day and after lunch.

Morning registration starts at 8.45am. Children need to arrive and be in school at 8.45am. It is expected that all pupils are fully prepared for their school day.

Morning registration takes place between 8.45am and 8.55am.

Pupils arriving after registration will be given a 'late' mark. Pupils arriving after the register has closed at 9.30 am will be given an unauthorised late absent mark (U), which will be accumulated with other absence marks, and can lead to either a fine or prosecution for non – attendance.

Afternoon registration takes place at 12.45pm for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children and 12.55pm for Key Stage 2 children. Children going home for lunch need to arrive back to school in time for registration as education commences immediately after. Pupils arriving after registration will be marked as late. Any pupil arriving after 1.30pm will be given an unauthorised late absent mark.

Registers are taken within school electronically using the SIMS database.

All teachers complete the registers using the designated codes. Any absence reasons will be sought, and either an authorised or unauthorised code will be used. Not all reasons for absence are accepted by the school. The Headteacher / Attendance Officer can authorise absence from education. Contact from parents offering reasons for absence will not necessarily be accepted.

Punctuality
A pupil who arrives late:

- **Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L) and how many minutes late recorded.**
- **After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U) and how many minutes late recorded.**

It is vital that pupils start the day with their peers and teacher on time. Lateness can have the same damaging effect as absence, and Porter Croft Church of England Primary School expects all pupils to be punctual.

Children should be welcomed into school even when arriving late and not penalised as most of the time it will not be their fault they are late. Parents of pupils arriving late to school will be sent a text message every time their child is late to request a reason for lateness.

Letters will be sent home to parents on a half termly basis to make them aware how many times their child has been late and how many minutes they have lost.

Where a pupil is regularly late the attendance officer will contact the family to query the reason for the absence and consider any support needed. The punctuality will be monitored and suggestions of interventions such as advice on transport networks, offer of a place at the School Breakfast Club, a referral to MAST for support with routines will be offered.

The majority of pupils are punctual, and prepared for the school day, however it is sadly recognised that some pupils are regularly late, and this is a problem.

Absence

Unplanned absence
The pupil's parents / carers must notify the school of the reason for absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00 am or as soon as practically possible by calling or texting the school.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised (I) unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent / carer to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription appointment card or other form of appropriate 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.

Planned absence
Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the parents/carers notifies the school and shows their appointment card, letter or text.

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.

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 parent / carer on the morning of the first day of absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit, refer to children missing from education or if a safeguarding, issue will refer to the safeguarding lead.**
- **Identify whether the absence of approved or not**
- **Identify the correct attendance code to use an 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 children missing from education and the safeguarding team.**

Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through half termly letters and attendance reports for those whose attendance falls under 96%.

If there is no improvement or further decline in a child's attendance the following half term, the attendance officer will call parents to make them aware of the decline and discuss positive routes of improvement and any concerns the child may have.

Children with attendance under 95% will be placed on the cause for concern list and their attendance will be monitored closely, parents / carers will be notified of this.

Further Decline
Parents will initially receive a phone call from the attendance officer to discuss the attendance issues, if the decline continues then they will be invited into school for a meeting with the attendance officer to discuss this further. If the decline continues then a meeting with the Headteacher will be arranged.

Parents / carers may be invited to enter into a Parenting Contract. This is a formal written agreement between the parents / carers and either the Governing body or the Local Authority.

If interventions and support agreed by the parents / carers and school fails due to the lack of co-operation by the parents / carers then a Penalty Notice Warning Letter (PNWL) may be issued.

To Promote School Attendance
The school will work as a team to deliver the importance of attendance to pupils, parents / carers, school staff and governors

Attendance will be reviewed on a regular basis ensuring that parents / carers receive half termly updates, and that Governors have access to all statistics.

Details of class attendance figures will be displayed weekly in the entrance hall, along with a certificate to the highest class attendance given in assembly weekly.

Attendance will be regularly highlighted formally and informally at coffee mornings, social gatherings, workshops, transition meetings etc.

All improvers are recognised every half term year by receiving a letter and recognition from the Headteacher.

Every term, children with 97% and over will be rewarded with a prize, this year this has been good attendance stationary. Their names will be read out in the end of term assembly and awarded with the prize. The class with the best attendance for a term will be awarded the attendance trophy and receive a class prize.

Children with 97% attendance and over will be placed in a termly prize drawer with a change to win a voucher.

Term time holidays foreign travel
We do not authorise any term time holidays/visits/family gatherings of any kind. Fixed-term penalties will be issued.

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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- **Compassionate leave for funerals of an immediate family member**
- **A situation where a company/organisation policy (e.g. NHS workers, serving military, police force), is for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentation from the organisation.**
- **Service personnel returning from/ scheduled to embark up a tour or duty abroad.**
- **Farming families whose work patterns mean they cannot holiday during the summer months. O**
- **Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided from a qualified professional such as a Doctor**

No leave of absence can be authorised by school for holidays during term time. (IOW Council vs Platt April 2017).

School expects all leave to be arranged out of term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time. Where there are genuine exceptional circumstances school MAY authorise leave during term time and will consider each request on its own merits, but as a rule no term time leave is authorised.

Any requests for term time leave should be made in writing via the term time leave request form, by the parent/carer providing details of the exceptional circumstances and stating specific start and end dates. The

request should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the intended leave. The actual date that the child will return to school should always be provided by the parent/carer. School will inform parents in writing advising whether the leave is authorised or unauthorised, clearly stating why a decision has been taken. Parents/carers should contact school if any delays occur.

The following will be considered:
Pupils must have at least 95% attendance
Any leave must be applied for 10 days in advance
Leave during SATS or at the start of a new term will not be authorised.
Any request for leave in term time must be firstly applied for by completing the request form, and secondly be discussed in a meeting with the Headteacher.

If the pupil fails to return to school by the agreed date supplied by parents / carers then the process of removing the pupil from the school roll will begin. The pupils parents / carers will have signed an agreement which agrees to this action being taken. Sheffield City Council policy and procedures will be followed and a referral made to Children Missing from Education (CME)

Once a child has been removed from roll a place back at this school cannot be guaranteed.

Children will be provided with work to complete during their leave.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- **Illness and medical/dental appointments**
- **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 date is set apart.**

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.

With effect from 19th August 2024 If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 per child within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the headteacher, local authority 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 and unauthorised term time leave**
- **Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without justifiable reason**

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

Children Missing from Education
Where a child is missing from school for 10 consecutive days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make a referral to Sheffield City Council Children Missing from Education.

Reasonable steps taken should include

- **Telephone calls home to all contact numbers**
- **Letters home**
- **If they have siblings, contact their relevant schools to see if they are in school / nursery**
- **2 Home visits – if no one in a note is to be left asking them to contact school urgently.**
- **Enquiries made with neighbours**
- **If any other known services involved contact made to these.**
- **All contacts to be recorded**

Attendance Monitoring
The Attendance Officer monitors attendance. This is a weekly process where the data from SIMS is looked and analysed.

Monitoring Attendance
The school will:

- **Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level**
- **Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern**

Pupil level absence 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 national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing Attendance
The school will:

- **Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families**
- **Look at historical and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and ten develop strategies to address these patterns**

Using data to improve attendance
The school will:

- **Provide regular attendance reports to 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**

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 sever absence**
- **Hold regular meeting with parents of pupils who the school 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**

Monitoring arrangements
This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year, by the Attendance Champion. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Premises, Behaviour and Safeguarding and Mental Health Committee.

Links with other polices

This policy links to the following policies

- **Safeguarding Policy**
- **Behaviour Policy**