

Pivot Academy Attendance Policy September 2020

Next Review Date: August 2021

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 Pivot regard regular attendance at school as essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all children and that regular attendance at school is necessary to promote better life chances. The school's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late.

There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

There is now more Government pressure on schools than ever before to ensure the regular attendance of children in their school. There is a legal requirement for schools to set targets for improving school attendance.

This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

1.2 WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parent's/carer's responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents details on attendance in our regular contact.
- Report to parent/carer's at least termly on their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through group competitions, certificates and prizes.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

2.2 Attendance Team

Pivot Academy have a dedicated attendance team. This is made up of key staff from the Social Work team and each academy site.

There are weekly meetings held to identify areas and pupils of concern who will then receive targeted support through home visits and meetings held in school. Should

this not be successful then further steps will be taken with the individual families as shown in the letters contained in the Appendices.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

3.1 Every half day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carer’s keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

A breakdown of attendance coding is provided in the appendices.

3.2 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parents/carer’s fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carer’s will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are shared with the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Services.

4.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES

4.1 Pivot academy registers are taken at 9:30am and the cut off time is 9:45am for morning marks.

Afternoon registers are taken at 1pm and the cut off time is 1:15pm for afternoon marks.

4.2 **If a child is absent parents/carer’s must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (before 9:30am).

- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – parents/carers should do this even if they have already telephoned us.
- Or parents/carers can call in and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them.

4.3 If a child is absent we will:

- Send a text message by 10:30am to request parents/carers to contact school.
- Telephone parents/carer's on the first day of absence if parents/carers do not make contact.
- Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation as required with our social work team.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service and placing school where appropriate; if attendance falls below 95%.
- If we have had no contact by the third day of absence a home visit will be carried out (by the Social Work team if necessary). If no contact can be made we will request a welfare check from the police on 101.
- If a child is absent but has left home for school, please refer to missing procedures at the end of this document.
- If further contact cannot be made within 5 days then the attendance and pupil support service will be notified.

5.0 TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carer's about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. Parents and carers must update school if contact numbers change as stated in the home school agreement.

6.0 LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher, getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the end of registration as outlined in section 4.1.
- All children arriving after registration period will be signed in at reception on the pupil signing in and out sheets. The reason for lateness is also recorded.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carer's will be asked to meet with the school to resolve the problem, but parents/carer's can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

7.0 HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Parents/carers wishing to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time must complete the **Holiday Request Form** and return to the Headteacher **before** booking the holiday. The form is available from the school office.

Parents/carers must understand that by taking children out of school they are making a choice to miss out on part of their child's education.

If parents/carers take their child out of school on a holiday which has not been authorised by the Headteacher they may be fined £60.00 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 if paid within 28 days. This is per parent and per child. Alternatively, the Local Authority may take legal action against you for the non-attendance of your child where the maximum penalty for an offence is £2500.

8.0 ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICE

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, we may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority. He/She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carer's or children may wish to contact the APSS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the Pivot office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

9.0 SUMMARY

We have a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All Pivot staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as a high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendices

Attendance Letter: General

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to **all** parents and carers of pupils at **(School)** to remind you of the importance of regular school attendance. We feel sure that you want your child(**ren**) to do well at school. A pupil with 90% attendance misses the equivalent of half a day schooling each week.

Research shows that children who are not in school regularly and on time are most vulnerable, academically disadvantaged and easily disaffected.

School staff meet regularly to discuss ways of improving the attendance and achievement of pupils. With your help we aim to make good attendance a priority for all pupils. We expect your child to achieve at least 95% overall attendance target throughout their school life.

In line with government guidance; this year we are working in a different way. This involves setting targets for improved attendance. Where targets are not met, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting or attendance panel to discuss these attendance difficulties and find ways of working together with school and the Attendance and Pupil Support Service to overcome them. New targets will then be set.

Our aim is to work in partnership with parents to resolve any problem relating to attendance, we do have the powers to bring cases before the Magistrates Court or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if unauthorised absence persists.

If you would like to discuss this initiative further or would like support from the Academy attendance team or the Attendance and Pupil Support Service to help you improve your child's school attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely

Attendance Letter: Stage 1

Parents name

Address

Date:

Re:

I am writing to you today to pass on our concerns about your child's attendance at school.

Your child's attendance is current at xx%.

I will continue to monitor **(names)** attendance for the next 4 school weeks; we expect that your child should achieve a minimum of 95% attendance. If your child's attendance does not significantly improve you will be asked to attend an Attendance Panel in school to investigate the reasons for non-attendance.

Should you require support in this matter please do not hesitate to contact the school or myself at the above address.

Yours Sincerely

Attendance Letter: Stage 2

Parents name

Address

Date:

Re:

We wrote to you on **(date)** explaining our concerns about your child's attendance at **(school)**. You were informed of the level of your child's attendance at that date and set the target attendance of 95%.

We have now reviewed your child's attendance for that period and are disappointed to find that the target has not been achieved.

Over the last 4 week monitoring period your child achieved () % attendance.

Whilst our aim is to work in partnership with parents to resolve any problems relating to attendance we do have the powers to bring cases before the Magistrates Court or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if unauthorised absence persists. Please see attached leaflet.

I will continue to monitor **(names)** attendance for the next 4 school weeks; we expect that your child should achieve a minimum of 95% attendance. If your child's attendance does not significantly improve you will be asked to attend an Attendance Panel in school to investigate the reasons for non-attendance.

Should you require support in this matter please do not hesitate to contact the school or myself at the above address.

Yours Sincerely

Attendance Letter: Stage 2 Improvement

Parents name

Address

Date:

Re:

We wrote to you on **(date)** explaining our concerns about your child's attendance at **(school)**. You were informed of the level of your child's attendance at that date and set the target attendance of 95%.

We have now reviewed your child's attendance for that period. It is observed that your child's attendance has greatly improved. Over the monitoring period your child achieved () % attendance.

We are sure that as a caring and responsible parent you will share the importance with the school on the need for regular and punctual school attendance. This is essential to ensure your child receives the full benefit of **(his/her)** education to which **(name)** is entitled.

School will continue to monitor **(names)** attendance; it is expected that this will continue to improve. Should you require support in this matter please do not hesitate to contact the school or myself at the above address.

Yours Sincerely

Attendance Letter: Stage 2, No Improvement

Parents name

Address

Date:

Re:

Dear

We last wrote to you on **(date)** explaining our concerns about your child's attendance at **(school)**. You were informed of the level of your child's attendance at that date and a target for attendance was set.

We have now reviewed your child's attendance for that period and are disappointed to find that the target has not been achieved. The staff at Pivot Academy and the attendance team are committed to raising the attendance and attainment of all students. We need your help to achieve the best for your child.

This letter is to invite you to an Attendance Panel on **(date)** at **(school)**

Our aim will be to identify reasons for your child's non attendance, resolve any problems and reset a target for a further four week period. Failure to reach this target could result in a Penalty Notice being issued or prosecution under the 1996 Education Act.

It is of vital importance that you attend this appointment. Your child will be expected to attend school. It may be appropriate to include your child at some point at the panel, in which case they will be contacted by a member of school staff.

If this date or time is not convenient please contact the school or myself at the above address to arrange an alternative.

Yours Sincerely

Attendance Letter: Stage 3

Parent/carer

Address

Date:

Re:

Dear

You may remember that you were invited to a meeting at **(school)** on **(date)** which you failed to attend. This meeting was to enable us to discuss concerns in regard to your **childs(rens)** school attendance.

In your absence a further 4 week monitoring period was set **(dates)**

It is expected that your child will achieve a minimum of 95% attendance over this period.

I must emphasise to you that you have a legal responsibility to ensure that **(child)** attends regular education; unfortunately we have now reach a stage where (child's) attendance remains a concern despite numerous attempts to address this with you.

You must contact us within 7 days to discuss our concerns otherwise we will commence legal proceedings.

Yours Sincerely

Unauthorised Holiday Letter

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to **all** parents and carers of pupils at **(School)** to remind you of the importance of regular school attendance.

Over the last school year there have been a number of parents who have taken their children out of school for extended holidays in term time..

We feel sure that you want your child(**ren**) to do well at school. Taking a holiday in term time means that children miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on.

Parents do not have a legal right to take their children out of school for holidays; you should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time. Taking your child out of school without permission may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

We are committed to working in partnership with children and families to provide the best education possible for your child. We are counting on your support in this matter.

Kind Regards

Head Teacher

Holiday Request Form

This form has been designed to clarify the process of holiday requests. The school is expected to comply with Government guidance by the DfE (Department for Education), and the LEA (Local Education Authority)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Pupil Name | | | |
| Date of birth | | | |
| Any other school age children? | Name | School | |
| | Name | School | |
| Dates of travel | | | |
| Total amount of days absent from school | | | |
| Does the holiday overlap with beginning or end of term? | | YES: <input type="checkbox"/> | NO: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Please state the reason for your travel | | | |
| The following questions are outlined within the DfE expectations | | | Yes No |
| <i>Is the request due to 'special' circumstances, such as:</i> Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and | | | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A family needing to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis. If yes, please give details: | | | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |



Each request can only be judged on a case by case basis, you will receive a reply from the school in writing.

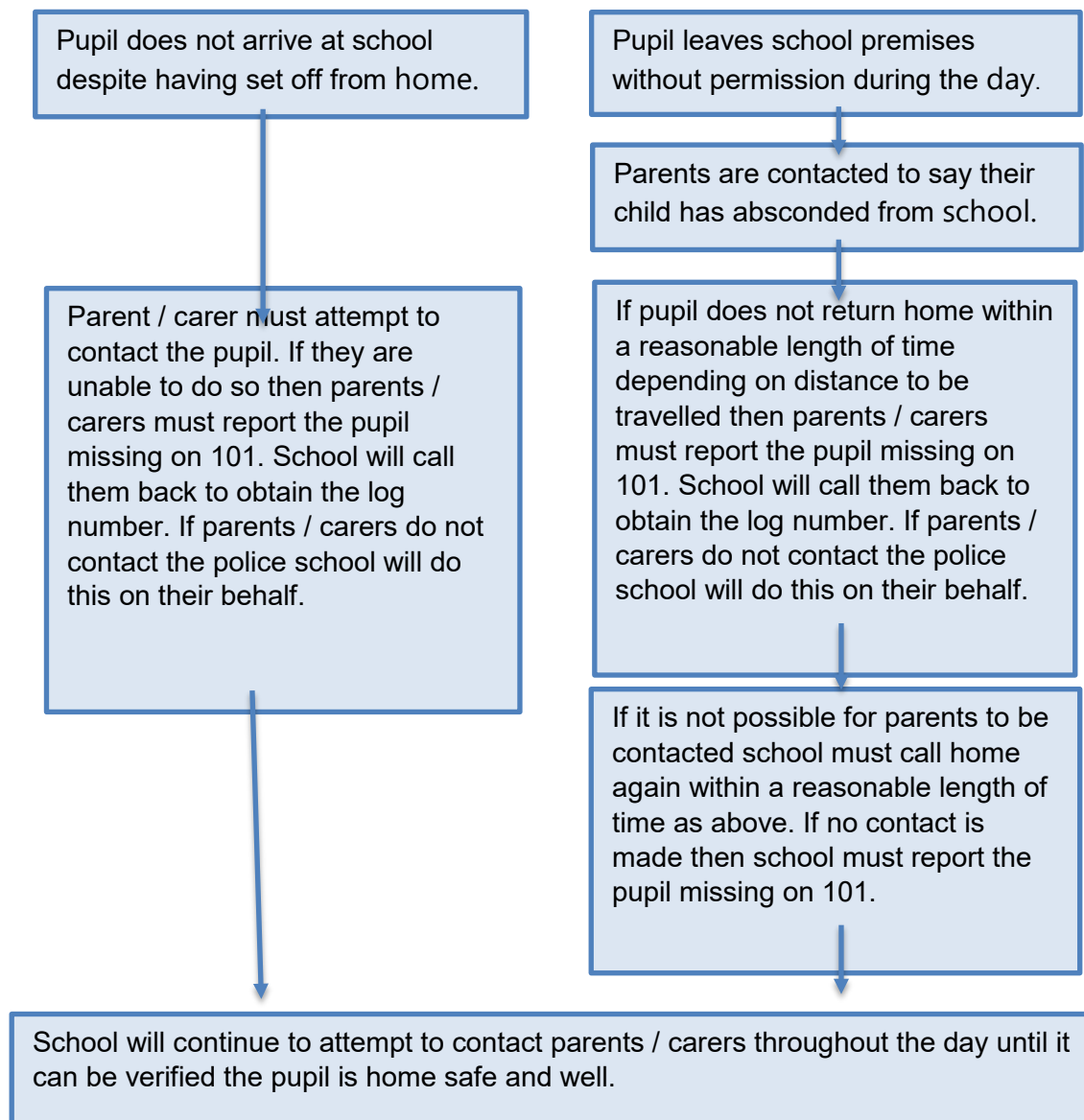
Person submitting application:

Relationship to child:

Signature:

Date:

Procedures for Missing and Absconding Pupils



Registration Codes

| Register Code | Description |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| / | Present AM ** |
| \ | Present PM ** |
| L | Late (before registers closed) marked as present ** |
| I | Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) |
| M | Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments |
| R | Authorised absence due to religious observance |
| S | Authorised absence due to study leave |
| T | Authorised absence due to traveller absence |
| H | Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday |
| E | Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made |
| C | Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances |
| B | Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration) ** |
| D | Dual registered (at another establishment) - NOT counted in possible attendances ** |
| J | Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview ** |
| P | Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity ** |
| V | Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip ** |
| W | Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience ** |

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| G | Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday |
| U | Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed |
| O | Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description |
| N | Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided |
| X | Non-compulsary school age absence - not counted in possible attendances ** |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances ** |
| # | Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances ** |