



The Pioneers Academy

Attendance Policy

THE PIONEERS ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Status: School Policy

Applies to: All pupils

School Day: 8:30am – 3:30pm

Gates Open: 8:00am

Policy Owner: Headteacher

Review: Annually

1. Policy Statement

The Pioneers Academy is committed to ensuring that every pupil achieves the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality.

Regular attendance is essential for pupils to make good academic progress, develop positive relationships, participate fully in school life and maintain their wellbeing.

Every lesson missed represents lost learning time, and persistent lateness or absence can have a significant impact on a pupil's education.

The school expects pupils to attend every day that the school is open and to arrive on time, ready to learn.

The Pioneers Academy will work closely with pupils, parents and carers to promote excellent attendance and will take appropriate action where attendance or punctuality becomes a concern.

This policy has been developed with regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*.

2. School Start and Registration

The school gates open at **8:00am**.

Pupils are expected to arrive at school in sufficient time to enter the building, prepare for the school day and be ready for registration at **8:30am**.

The official start of the school day is **8:30am**.

Registration will take place at the beginning of the school day.

Any pupil arriving at **8:31am or later will receive a late mark**.

Parents and carers are therefore expected to ensure that pupils arrive at school with sufficient time to be ready for registration by 8:30am.

3. Punctuality

Punctuality is an important part of school attendance and school expectations.

A pupil who arrives after 8:30am is late, even if the pupil arrives only a few minutes after the start of the school day.

The school recognises that occasional unavoidable circumstances may occur. However, repeated lateness is not acceptable and will be addressed promptly.

Where a pupil arrives at **8:31am or later**, the pupil will:

- receive a late mark;
- be recorded accurately on the attendance register;
- be expected to attend a **same-day after-school detention**;
- have repeated lateness monitored by the school.

Parents will be contacted where a pattern of lateness develops.

Persistent lateness may result in further attendance intervention and, where appropriate, involvement of the relevant local authority attendance service.

4. Same-Day Late Detention

The Pioneers Academy operates a clear and consistent response to lateness.

Any pupil who arrives at **8:31am or later** will be required to complete a **same-day after-school detention**.

Parents and carers are expected to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that pupils can remain in school for the detention.

Repeated lateness will not be treated as an isolated issue. The school will consider the overall pattern of attendance and punctuality and may arrange a meeting with parents where concerns persist.

5. Attendance Expectations

The school expects all pupils to achieve excellent attendance.

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable education and to support their child in attending school regularly.

Parents should:

- ensure their child attends school every day;

- ensure their child arrives on time;
- notify the school promptly when their child is genuinely unable to attend;
- provide accurate information regarding reasons for absence;
- arrange routine appointments outside school hours wherever reasonably possible;
- avoid taking pupils out of school during term time;
- work constructively with the school where attendance concerns arise.

6. Absence Due to Illness

If a pupil is genuinely unwell and unable to attend school, parents/carers must notify the school in accordance with the school's absence reporting procedure.

The school will monitor patterns of illness and absence.

Where a pupil's attendance becomes a concern, the school may request appropriate supporting information and/or seek advice from relevant professionals.

The school will take a supportive and individualised approach where a pupil has a genuine medical condition or other barrier to attendance.

7. Medical and Dental Appointments

Parents and carers are expected to arrange medical, dental and other routine appointments **outside school hours wherever reasonably possible**.

Where this is not possible, parents should inform the school in advance and provide appropriate details of the appointment.

Where a pupil must attend an appointment during the school day, the pupil should be absent for the **minimum amount of time necessary**.

Parents should not routinely book appointments during school hours where an alternative appointment outside school time is reasonably available.

The school may request evidence of appointments where appropriate.

The school will consider each situation individually and record attendance in accordance with the applicable attendance regulations and DfE guidance.

8. Holidays During Term Time

The Pioneers Academy has a **strict policy against taking holidays during term time**.

Parents and carers must not remove their child from school for the purpose of a holiday during term time.

A holiday is generally not considered an exceptional circumstance, and term-time holidays cannot normally be authorised.

Parents should plan family holidays around the published school holiday dates.

Where a pupil is taken out of school for a holiday without authorisation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the school may refer the matter to the relevant local authority in accordance with its attendance procedures.

Parents should be aware that unauthorised term-time absence may result in legal intervention, including a penalty notice where the relevant legal threshold is met.

9. Requests for Leave of Absence

Parents who believe that there are exceptional circumstances requiring their child to be absent during term time must make a request to the Headteacher in advance.

Requests must explain:

- the reason for the requested absence;
- the dates of the requested absence;
- why the circumstances are exceptional;
- any supporting evidence.

The Headteacher will consider requests on an individual basis and in accordance with statutory guidance.

A request being submitted does not mean that the absence will be authorised.

Family holidays, cheaper travel arrangements, parental work commitments or convenience will not normally constitute exceptional circumstances.

10. Unauthorised Absence

Absence may be recorded as unauthorised where:

- no acceptable reason has been provided;
- the school has not been informed of the reason for absence;
- the reason provided is not considered a valid reason for absence;
- a pupil is taken on holiday during term time without authorised leave;
- a leave of absence request has been refused but the pupil is nevertheless absent;
- a pupil is absent for a medical or other appointment where the absence has not been appropriately agreed or is unnecessarily lengthy;
- the school has reasonable concerns regarding the accuracy of information provided about the absence.

The school will maintain accurate attendance records and will take action where unauthorised absence becomes a concern.

11. Persistent Absence

The school will monitor attendance regularly.

Particular attention will be given to pupils whose attendance is:

- below the school's expected standard;
- showing a declining pattern;
- affected by repeated lateness;
- affected by repeated unauthorised absence;
- approaching or meeting the Department for Education's persistent absence threshold.

The DfE currently defines persistent absence as missing **10% or more of possible sessions**.

Where attendance concerns arise, the school will seek to understand the reasons for absence and work with the pupil and family to improve attendance.

12. Attendance Monitoring and Intervention

The Pioneers Academy will monitor attendance and punctuality regularly.

Where concerns are identified, the school may use a graduated approach, including:

1. monitoring attendance and punctuality;
2. contacting parents/carers;
3. discussing concerns with the pupil;
4. issuing attendance letters;
5. arranging meetings with parents/carers;
6. establishing an attendance improvement plan;
7. setting attendance targets;
8. making appropriate referrals for additional support;
9. working with the local authority attendance service;
10. considering legal intervention where appropriate.

The school will maintain records of attendance concerns, communication with parents and interventions undertaken.

13. Safeguarding and Attendance

Attendance is closely linked to safeguarding.

A pupil's unexplained, prolonged or unusual absence may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns.

The school will therefore consider safeguarding alongside attendance when monitoring absence.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, staff will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and refer concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

Schools have a statutory responsibility to monitor attendance and take proactive steps where poor or irregular attendance creates concern.

The school maintains a safeguarding priority list identifying pupils who may require additional monitoring and follow-up in relation to attendance and welfare.

Where a pupil identified on the safeguarding priority list is absent from school without prior notification, the school will make contact with the parent or carer as a priority. Where contact is successfully made, the school may request appropriate evidence or confirmation to verify the reason for the pupil's absence.

If the telephone call is not answered and there has been no communication from the parent or carer regarding the pupil's absence, the school will escalate the matter in accordance with its safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, a home visit will be undertaken by a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to establish the pupil's welfare and confirm the circumstances surrounding the absence.

All contact attempts, information provided, concerns identified and actions taken will be appropriately recorded and reviewed by the safeguarding team. Where concerns about a pupil's welfare remain, the school will follow its safeguarding escalation procedures and seek advice or make referrals to relevant external agencies where necessary.

14. Children Missing Education

The Pioneers Academy will follow statutory requirements concerning children missing education.

Where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown or there are significant concerns regarding their attendance or education, the school will take appropriate steps to establish the pupil's whereabouts and ensure that safeguarding and attendance procedures are followed.

The school will work with the relevant local authority where required.

15. Parent and Carer Responsibilities

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends school every day;
- ensure their child arrives before 8:30am;
- ensure their child is properly prepared for school;

- notify the school immediately when their child is unable to attend;
- provide truthful and accurate reasons for absence;
- avoid term-time holidays;
- arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours;
- collect pupils promptly where they need to leave school during the day;
- cooperate with the school where attendance concerns arise.

Failure to engage with attendance concerns may result in the school escalating the matter in accordance with statutory attendance procedures.

16. Pupil Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school every day;
- arrive on time;
- be ready to learn by 8:30am;
- attend all lessons;
- remain in school throughout the school day unless authorised to leave;
- take responsibility for maintaining good attendance and punctuality;
- follow the school's attendance and behaviour expectations.

17. School Responsibilities

The Pioneers Academy will:

- maintain an accurate attendance register;
- record attendance and absence in accordance with statutory requirements;
- monitor attendance and punctuality;
- identify emerging attendance concerns;
- communicate concerns to parents/carers;
- provide appropriate support where barriers to attendance are identified;
- work with external agencies where appropriate;
- maintain appropriate attendance records;
- follow safeguarding procedures where attendance concerns indicate a possible welfare issue;
- take appropriate action where attendance does not improve.

18. Religious Observance

The school recognises that pupils may require absence for religious observance.

Requests will be considered in accordance with the statutory attendance framework and the circumstances of the individual pupil.

Parents should provide advance notice wherever possible.

19. Attendance at the End of the School Day

The school day finishes at **3:40pm** unless an alternative finishing time has been communicated to parents.

Pupils attending an after-school detention or other school activity will remain on site for the required period.

Parents and carers are responsible for making appropriate arrangements for collection where required.

20. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through regular review of:

- whole-school attendance;
- year-group attendance;
- individual pupil attendance;
- persistent absence;
- severe absence;
- unauthorised absence;
- lateness;
- term-time holiday requests;
- attendance interventions;
- safeguarding-related attendance concerns.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where statutory guidance or legislation changes.

21. Policy Statement to Parents

The Pioneers Academy believes that **every minute of learning matters**.

Parents and carers are expected to work in partnership with the school to ensure that pupils attend regularly, arrive on time and make the most of every educational opportunity.

The school will be firm and consistent regarding attendance because good attendance is fundamental to academic achievement, personal development, safeguarding and future success.

School start: 8:30am

Gates open: 8:00am

Late from: 8:31am

Late consequence: Same-day after-school detention

Term-time holidays: Not permitted except where leave is granted in accordance with exceptional-circumstances requirements

Routine medical/dental appointments: To be arranged outside school hours wherever reasonably possible

Approved by: _____

Headteacher: Mrs Shabnam Parveen

Date: _____

Review Date: _____