



Attendance Policy

June 2025

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This policy has been written in consultation with staff, students, parents and Governors. It has been reviewed in **July 2025** and has been approved for implementation by the full Governing Body as dated.

A) Overview

Penistone Grammar School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each child to reach their full potential. Research shows a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. For further information please see the Department for Education

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report 'The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4' and the document 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

Penistone Grammar School aims to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to strive towards every child reaching at least 97% attendance in order to ensure each child can get the best from the educational opportunities provided.

By working in partnership with parents and other agencies we are able to ensure that we have clear and robust strategies in place to manage and promote regular attendance, for all students at Penistone Grammar School.

Research has shown that attendance for students for whom schools receive a pupil premium is often lower than for those whom no pupil premium is received. This subsequently has a negative impact on the attainment of these students; therefore, as a school we offer additional support and intervention for pupil premium students and their families.

In order to manage and promote regular attendance Penistone Grammar School will:

- Keep parents updated on attendance and the School calendar, via letters home, newsletters, emails/texts, the My Child at School App and the school website (www.penistone-gs.uk)
- Report to parents how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this, via regular parent evenings and data reports
- Monitor individual student's attendance in order to:
 - a) Celebrate good and improved school attendance and reward this through competitions, certificates and events.
 - b) Notify parents when we are worried about their child's attendance by following the attendance intervention map; this may involve letters, meetings in school, home visits or referral to the Education Welfare Service.

In order to manage and promote the regular attendance of their children parents will

- Impress on their children the importance of regular school attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too unwell to attend
- Establish effective communication with Penistone Grammar School and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school, so that we can work together to resolve any issues
- Contact Penistone Grammar School on each day of absence to inform school of reason for absence and when the child is expected to return, keeping school informed if the absence is likely to continue so that school and partner agencies can ensure that amendments or alternatives can be made to provision if required
- Provide school where possible or where requested with any medical appointment cards, and make appointments out of school hours. Where appointments are during the school day parents will

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ensure that children attend prior to or following their appointment. Whole day medical appointments will not be authorised without evidence.

- ☐ Attend any meetings called by Penistone Grammar School and partner agencies to discuss attendance
- ☐ Provide medical evidence for an absence due to illness if requested

In order to manage and promote regular school attendance the Education Welfare Service will;

- ☐ Work with Penistone Grammar School to support families with students whose attendance level is a cause for concern
- ☐ Attend meetings with Penistone Grammar School to address with parents any worries the school and Education Welfare Service may have about a child's attendance
- ☐ Receive referrals from school to address matters of poor school attendance by:
 - a) visiting parents' homes to undertake assessment of need, challenge and resolve matters of poor school attendance
 - b) involving other agencies where appropriate, such as the 0-19 Service

In situations where all other strategies have failed to improve school attendance, Education Welfare Service will enforce the law; this may result in fines, a custodial sentence and/or a Parenting Order.

B) Absences

When a child is absent from Penistone Grammar School and no reason has been received for the absence an automated text message will be sent home during the morning session.

For safeguarding reasons, parents are expected to inform school of the reason for absences on each and every day of absence; however, it is school who make the decision whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence.

School will make this decision based on the information available to them. Parents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible and information such as appointment cards, medication or application for leave of absence will assist school in making this decision.

Re-occurring unauthorised absence (irregular attendance) will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and this can lead to a Fixed Penalty Warning Notice being requested from the Local Authority. School will inform parents/carers if this occurs.

C) Request for leave of absence in term time

Penistone Grammar School have adopted the LA policy in respect of leave of absence in term time. In instances where parents do not complete a leave of absence form, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

As part of the ongoing drive to improve pupil attendance levels, recent amendments to Government regulations on the registration of pupils in education mean that the Principal may no longer grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. BMBC have given examples of "exceptional circumstances" as where there is a case of serious illness or family bereavement only.

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These are not in any way exclusive situations and we will continue to exercise discretion and consider each case in its own merit. According to the guidelines from BMBC it is unlikely that leave of absence will be granted when the reason given is related to employer's holiday restrictions.

If you are intending taking your child out of school during term time, please complete a Leave of Absence Request form and return it with as much information as possible. Penistone Grammar School will advise you promptly of our decision via a letter from the Principal. If you decide to withdraw your child from school for a Leave of Absence which has not been authorised a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

Penistone Grammar School will be following the new DfE National Framework and the Barnsley Code of Conduct 2024 when requesting Penalty Notices to be issued from the Local Authority from September 2024. Further information on the National Framework can be found in Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024.

As the Principal should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

It is the student's responsibility to speak to their teachers prior to going on holiday to make themselves aware of the work which will be covered in their absence and ensure this is completed.

D) Absence for participation in a performance

Where absence is requested for participation in a performance, Penistone Grammar School will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to ensure that any performance absence is within the parameters of the law. Licence applications should be submitted to the Principal with as much notice as possible.

It is the student's responsibility to speak to their teachers prior to any absence to make themselves aware of the work which will be covered while they are out of school and ensure this work is completed.

E) Absence for participation in a sporting event

All absences for participation in a sporting event should be submitted to the student's Achievement Leader who will consider whether or not we are willing to support this activity by looking at Attendance, Effort/Progress and Behaviour in school. Applications for such absences should be supported by all relevant documentation from the sporting bodies concerned and should be submitted with as much notice as possible.

After the Easter holiday no Y11 students will be granted authorised absence for participation in a sporting event; exceptions would include the following although the rules on data, attendance and behaviour would still apply:

- Those playing summer sports eg golf, cricket – granted 2 days maximum
- Where a sporting competition has run throughout the year and a team has qualified for rounds which take place in the final term of the school year
- Where students are Sports Leaders and have commitments related to this programme

It is the student's responsibility to speak to their teachers prior to any absence to make themselves aware of the work which will be covered while they are out of school and ensure this work is completed.

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F) Supporting Information

In some cases it may be necessary for us to ask parents to provide supporting information to cover absences from school due to ill health. This is intended to further enable home and school to work together to ensure the correct support is in place for the student.

If a student is absent from school due to ill health parents/carers should consult with their doctor and provide evidence that this consultation has taken place: evidence can take many forms, it does not need to be a letter from the doctor, it could be for example an appointment card, a prescription (tear off slip), confirmation from the doctor's receptionist that they attended surgery/had a telephone consultation or dated prescribed medication. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to obtain supporting information and send it to school for the attention of our School Attendance team as soon as possible.

If a student suffers from an ongoing illness which causes frequent absence from school, it is often possible to obtain a "blanket" letter from their doctor outlining the situation. Once this letter is in school, absences relating to **that medical condition only** do not require further supporting information although we may ask for the information to be renewed at times. Absences relating to **other medical issues** would still need to be evidenced as outlined above.

Failure to provide supporting information as requested above will result in the absence being classed as unauthorised. Ten or more unauthorised absences in one term can lead to a Fixed Penalty Warning Notice being issued by the Local Authority. Failure to meet these conditions could lead to referral to the Education Welfare Service.

If a student who has been asked to provide supporting information for absences is sent home from school unwell during the school day, we will authorise the absence on that day and the following day only. Any subsequent days of absence due to illness will require supporting information as outlined above for us to be able to authorise the absence.

When any student has a whole day of absence for a medical appointment we require to see the appointment card to be able to authorise the absence.

G) Punctuality

It is the expectation of Penistone Grammar School that every student will be in school and ready for learning at 8.20am every morning. They will then attend each lesson throughout the day on time.

Failure to meet this expectation will be dealt with as follows:

- Lates to School – students who are late to school lose a line. Multiple late lines will be dealt with following our normal behaviour guidelines and could potentially lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Service. Multiple late lines can result in a fixed penalty being issued.
- Lates to Lesson – students who arrive late to lesson without a valid reason will be given a behaviour line. This will then be dealt with in line with our behaviour policy.

H) Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The following policies all link into our Safeguarding policy to ensure that we are working together to safeguard children:

- **Behaviour**
- **Anti-Bullying**
- **Health and Safety**

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We have also adopted the LA policies on Children Missing Education, Elective home Education and Leave of Absence during in term time.

All these policies have been endorsed by our governing body, who support the school in all attempts to improve the attendance and safeguarding agenda.

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