



Attendance Policy Information for Parents/Carers			
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1 Introduction

This policy has due regard for the Equality Act 2011 whereby the policy's actions advance equal opportunity, foster good relations and seek to eliminate discrimination for all members of the school community.

Poole Grammar School is committed to safeguarding children. The school fulfils its responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents: Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education. Safeguarding links/risks associated with this policy: It is important to recognise that poor attendance or punctuality may be an indication of other concerns such as neglect or abuse. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the SEND policy.

2 The Principles

The School places a high priority on achieving excellent attendance, believing that this enables students to take full advantage of their education and to gain habits and skills appropriate later for their working life. Any absence from school can potentially impact on an individual's progress in school and affect their ultimate outcomes.

3 Responsibilities

As parents of a child who has gained a place at Poole Grammar School, you have the primary legal responsibility for ensuring that they attend school regularly and punctually. However, we believe that helping to create an excellent pattern of attendance is a shared responsibility. We will, therefore, work with you, your child, the Local Authority and other appropriate agencies in order to achieve the best attendance possible for each individual. Specifically, we will

- register students in tutor groups at AM registration (08:30)
- register students in all teaching lessons (Period 4 is linked to PM registration);
- monitor attendance and punctuality, intervening without delay, if a problem is identified;
- enable access to live attendance data through a system such as SIMS Parent;
- include attendance figures in our reports to you;
- recognise excellent or improving attendance through the award of certificates.

You have a role in emphasising to your child the value of full attendance. Specifically, we ask you to:

- **notify the School by 09:00 on the first day when your child is ill** and each subsequent day that your child will not be in attendance;
 - by telephone (01202 692132 and selecting the attendance line) or
 - via the form available on the school website
- **give details of symptoms of illness** in the initial contact with the school if the absence is due to illness;
- **request permission for medical/dental appointments** by completing an appointment notification form prior to the appointment (available at the end of this policy and from the school website);
- **not take your child out of school for family holidays** during term time;
- **contact the tutor or Head of Year**, if you have any concerns about your child's attendance.

4 Understanding Types of Absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified **by the school** (not parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Any and all absences reported on the day will initially be considered unauthorised until sufficient information that the school feels confident that it can legitimately authorise the



absence.

Illness is generally classed as an authorised absence providing the school is notified via telephone or the online form according to the requirements highlighted above, but the school may request further details or evidence, especially if the student is classed as a persistent absentee using the “**Student Illness – Further Information Form**”. If further information/evidence is requested, the absence is likely to be unauthorised until further information is received.

Medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time are generally classed as an authorised absence, providing the school has received notification of the medical/dental appointment using the “**Authorisation of absence for medical appointments**” form at the end of this policy. This form should be submitted prior to the appointment, although it can be submitted retrospectively in the case of urgent or emergency appointments. Parents should try to ensure that wherever possible, medical/dental appointments are booked outside school hours. *Any medical or dental appointment will be recorded as an unauthorised absence until this form is received.*

For all other absences, the school will determine whether it can be classed as authorised or unauthorised on a case by case basis.

If the absence is for an **emergency** or **other unavoidable cause**, the school should be notified in line with the procedure for illness and then an “**Application for Authorised Absence**” request form (see end of this policy) should be completed. The absence will be recorded as “unauthorised” until this form is received.

For any other absence, an “**Application for Authorised Absence**” form (see end of this policy) should be completed in good time, and the school will consider the request for ‘leave of absence’.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school considers unreasonable and for which no ‘leave of absence’ has been given. This could include:

- children kept off school to assist with shopping or looking after younger siblings;
- day trips and holidays in term time
- absences which have not been properly explained;
- arrival at school after the register has been closed;
- truancy during the school day.

Unauthorised absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Every half term, Heads of Year and the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral), in conjunction with the Pastoral Assistant and School Attendance Officer, perform an attendance audit; the purpose of this is to identify students and parents/carers who may need further support to assist with improving attendance. Strategies used may include notification to the parents by letter, an action plan, peer or teacher mentor support and contact with/referral to outside agencies.

5 Leave of absence

Regulation 7 of the Education (Student Registration, England) 2006 Regulations was amended to prohibit a Head Teacher granting leave of absence to a student except where an application has been made **in advance** and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Under the amended regulations, a Head Teacher can agree to a leave of absence in term time only where there are ‘exceptional circumstances’. No leave of absence will be agreed unless the Head Teacher is satisfied that there are such exceptional circumstances. When a



leave of absence is taken and the school has not authorised the absence, the school may request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice may be issued:

- Where a parent has taken the pupil on a leave of absence during term-time without the school's authorisation and there are unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days), or
- If more than one period of absence is taken during term-time within any 12 month period without the school's authorisation and there are unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) overall, or
- Where the school has agreed to a specific number of sessions of leave during term-time due to exceptional circumstances, and any additional sessions of unauthorised leave have been taken outside of the agreed period.

Only in exceptional circumstances can leave be granted. Applications should be made using the "**Application for Authorised Absence**" form, available at the end of this policy. Following submission of the form, you will be notified of the school's decision within 10 working days. The school's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding its decision.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be recorded as unauthorised.

6 Holidays in Term Time

There is **no entitlement** in law to time off during the school term to go on holiday. Where the school receives notification or a request for leave of absence for a holiday, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

7 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the school day, they may miss vital information and news for the day plus participation in tutor group or assembly activities with their peers. Good habits in this area are also particularly important in the world outside school. Where a student arrives into school culpably late on more than one occasion, they will receive an appropriate sanction to ensure that they recognise the importance of arriving in a timely manner.

Students should arrive in their tutor rooms by 08:30 in the morning. Registers are completed by your child's tutor by 08:35. Should your child arrive into school after 08:30, they should proceed to the main office, where they should sign in using the relevant signing in book.

At 08:55, the registers will be closed. If a student arrives late to school (but prior to 08:55) this will be recorded as a late mark (L) which statically is considered as a "present" mark. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows that they have arrived late to school, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a 'present' mark and it will mean that they have an 'unauthorised absence' (U). If lateness becomes a regular problem (L or U), you will be asked to meet with the appropriate Head of Year with a view to resolving the problem. If this was not successful, the local authority will be engaged to take the matter forward.

We aim to have all students accounted for by 09:30 for safeguarding reasons, whether present in school or absent due to illness. This is also to ensure that the registers, as legal documents, are accurate. If a student has not received a mark during registration and has not signed in, and we have received no word that they are absent due to illness or for other reasons, the Attendance Officer will check teaching rooms for the student. If they are found



to have failed to sign in having arrived into school late, they will receive an appropriate sanction. Where no word has been received from home, and the student cannot be located in school, the School Attendance Officer will make contact with parents/carers to ensure the student is safe.

Afternoon session attendance marks will be recorded at the start of the period 4 lesson, at 12:20 (13:20 during the exam timetable period). If your child is not in the classroom at this time, but attends period 5, then they will receive a late mark. Sixth formers not attending a class will register in reception via the signing in books.

8 The Local Authority and Early Help Team

The Local Authority and Early Help Team supports us in seeking the way forward with any attendance issues. Like us, they will want to resolve the situation by agreement, but, if other ways of trying to improve a child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the local authority can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or, in extreme cases, prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

9 Persistent Absence (PA)

A student becomes a 'Persistent Absentee' when 10% or more of schooling is missed across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is likely to do considerable harm to any child's educational prospects and we aim to work closely with you to address this. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of doing so is given priority and you will normally be informed of this either via letter or a telephone call. PA students are monitored and supported closely. The school carries out regular attendance audits. Should a student's attendance be a cause for concern, then we may request that for all further ill-health absences, parents/carers complete a "**Student Illness – Further Information Form**" before the absence is authorised.

10 Sixth Form Students

In addition to the circumstances above where leave of absence would not be granted for main-school students, sixth form students should note that the following reasons for absence will not be authorised: holidays; work experience (this should be arranged outside of term time); driving lessons; part-time employment; child-minding.

It is important that students are on time to registration and to all lessons. If a sixth form student arrives late to school, they should sign in at main reception and then proceed directly to registration / assembly / the lesson.

If a sixth form student has to leave the school site during the school day and they are not intending to return to school, the student should sign out at main reception using the folder provided. If leaving the school site and intending to return (e.g. going to a lesson at Parkstone School or are going off site at lunchtime if issued with a midday exeat) the student should sign out, and sign back in, at main reception using the folder provided.

11 Summary

Continuity of attendance is vital for academic progress and absences could also affect your child's integration amongst his peers. We trust that we can rely on your support in seeking to achieve as high a level of attendance for him as possible.

11 Sign off

Policy agreed by the Full Governing Body

Date: June 2022

Next Review – January 2023



12 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Authorisation of absence for medical appointments

Authorisation of absence for medical appointments

Medical consultants and orthodontist appointments can be inflexible. Therefore, if despite your best efforts, your child's appointment has to be in school session time, please complete this form and attach a copy of any documentation confirming the appointment if you have it.

This form should be handed in to the school office **PRIOR** to the absence so that details may be recorded on the school system and authorisation be given. We will only contact you if further clarification is needed or authorisation is not given.

Child's name:	Form:
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Date of appointment:	Time of appointment:
Leaving school at:	Returning to school at:

Name and address of medical/dental centre/hospital:
Reason for appointment:

Signature of parent:
Print name:
Date of request:



Appendix 2 - Student Illness – Further Information Form

Student Illness – Further Information Form

Child's full name:	Form:
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First day of absence:	Last day of absence:
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Details of symptoms/illness

Medical professionals consulted?	Yes/No
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Signature of parent:

Print name:

Date:



Appendix 3 - Application for Authorised Absence request form

Application for Authorised Absence request form

Any application for leave of absence is granted at the discretion of the headteacher or a delegated member of senior staff. Only in exceptional circumstances will leave be granted. This form should be completed and handed in to the school office. Following submission of this form, you will be notified of the School's decision within 10 working days. The School's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the decision.

Child's full name:	Form:
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First day of requested absence:	Last day of requested absence
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Reason for absence request (give as much detail as possible, including any supporting evidence with your request)

By signing below, you confirm that all holders of parental responsibility are aware of the request for authorised absence.	
Parent/Carer Signature:	
Print name:	
Date:	

For school use

Date received	Current attendance	Comments	Authorised	Date parents notified	Added to SIMS