



Attendance & Punctuality Procedural Instructions

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1. Related Policy

- 1.1 This Procedural Instruction facilitates the compliant implementation of the Trust's Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Pontefract Academies Trust recognises the link between high levels of attendance and academic progress. To this end, each school has a responsibility to provide a welcoming, supportive, productive and safe learning environment, which supports high levels of attendance. The Trust's Policy sets its expectation of high attendance and punctuality along with:
- The aims and objectives of the policy.
 - The legal and regulatory framework around attendance and punctuality with which the Trust must comply.
 - Securing good attendance can not be seen in isolation and therefore this policy will be used in collaboration with other relevant Trust policies.
 - The potential consequences of failure to comply with the policy.
- 2.2 This Procedural Instruction will describe the processes applicable to staff, parents/carers and pupils/students in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- 2.3 Improving attendance is everyone's business. Pontefract Academies Trust understands that the barriers to accessing education can be wide and complex both within and beyond the school gates and are often specific to individual pupils and families.
- 2.4 The Trust acknowledges that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
- 2.5 For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

3. Working Together to Improve Attendance

- 3.1 Pontefract Academies Trust believe that treating the root cause of absence and removing barriers to attendance at home, in school or more broadly requires all of its schools to work in collaboration with local partners with families. All of our partners should work together to:
- Expect** – Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance across the school.
- Monitor** – Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and Understand – When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate Support – Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of a wider issue.

Formalise Support – Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce – Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupils right to an education.

4. Authorised Absences

4.1 Authorised absence is where the school has agreed the reason for the absence and approved it. This approval can be in advance, or agreed after the absence, where a satisfactory reason has been given for the absence.

4.2 Requests should be directed to the Headteacher, or other member or the school Senior Leadership team to whom they have delegated responsibility, may authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Genuine illness (where absence falls below 90% evidence may be requested).
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (routine appointments should be arranged out of school time).
- Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement).
- Attending an interview (for entry into another educational institution).
- A temporary, time-limited phased re integration plan (where the school and parent agree in exceptional circumstances that the pupil should be temporarily educated on a part time basis).
- Days of religious observance.
- Study leave (for recognised qualifications).
- Suspension.
- Involvement in a public performance, significant sporting activity (e.g. Olympics) or significant public event.

4.3 Please be aware that when requesting leave, this will generally not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Requests for pupils/students in Year 2, 6, 11, even for exceptional reasons.
- Requests made for leave during exam periods.
- Requests made for leave where there are coursework deadlines.
- Requests made for leave during SATs preparation or during the period of time when pupils/students sit SATs.
- Requests made for absence in September-October.
- Requests made for pupils/students who have attendance below 95%.
- Requests made for pupils/students who have had previous unauthorised absences, including where family holidays have been taken during term time.
- The Trust will not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation to be exceptional circumstance.

- 4.4 To make an authorised absence request, please use the [Trust Absence Request Form](#).
- 4.5 Pontefract Academies Trust recognise that there are certain activities where pupils can be allowed to be absent from school for educational activities or to attend other schools or settings. These circumstances are part of delivering a full-time education and are therefore not classified as absences for statistical purposes. For all codes linked to attendance see **Appendix B**.

5. Unauthorised Absences

- 5.1 Unauthorised absence is where a school has not agreed the reason for absence. Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as:
- Staying at home to care for family members who are unwell.
 - Days out, including exhibitions, sporting events etc.
 - Birthdays, weddings and anniversaries.
 - Shopping trips.
 - Family holidays (parents/carers are discouraged from taking pupils/students out of school for holidays during term time).
 - Arriving after registers have closed.
- 5.2 Absences which have not been explained, or where the school does not accept the explanation, will be treated as unauthorised.
- 5.3 The trust will be committed to working with families and other agencies in partnership to find supportive routes to improve attendance in the first instance.
- 5.4 In cases where all supportive measures have been exhausted and repeated or persistent unauthorised absence continues, Designated Safeguarding Leads may be informed, along with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Team to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of pupils is maintained.
- 5.5 Where a pupil/student has 20 days or more of continuous unauthorised absence and there has not been any contact made, they will be reported to the Local Authority as a child missing education. The Local Authority will advise if the child needs to be taken off role.

6. Medical/Dental Appointments

- 6.1 Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours, wherever possible. Where this is not possible pupils/students are expected to attend the school before and after the appointment.
- 6.2 Parents/carers will be asked to provide confirmation of the appointment (time/date/reason) in order for the absence to be authorised.
- 6.3 Authorisation will only be given for reasonable travel time to and from the appointment. Where it is considered practical and reasonable for the pupil/student to attend the school before and/or after the appointment and they do not attend, this will be considered unauthorised absence.

- 6.4 If emergency appointments are made at the start of the day, causing the pupil/student to arrive late confirmation of the appointment must be provided. Otherwise the absence will be treated as 'late'.

7. The Use of Alternative Provision

- 7.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education places the responsibility of the school setting to ensure that all pupils attending alternative provision are safe. SLT to ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed and assurance checks are in place for all pupils that attend alternative provision.
- 7.2 The appropriate attendance codes should be entered for pupils attending alternative provision. All checks to ensure the safeguarding of pupils that do not attend an allocated alternative provision should remain in place in line with this policy by the school setting.

8. Religious Observance

- 8.1 The Department of Education advises that, 'Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance'. If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirements for schools to agree to authorise absence.
- 8.2 Parent/carers are advised to contact the school to discuss any requests for leave made for religious observance.

9. Attendance Management

- 9.1 If a pupil/student is absent at morning registration without any contact from their parent/carer, the school will contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence.
- 9.2 Each school has a safeguarding responsibility to identify any pupils/students who are missing from education and will contact those individuals named as contacts on a pupil's/student's record to establish the whereabouts of the child. Contact will be attempted by telephone call, text message or email in the first instance.
- 9.3 Where the school cannot make contact representatives of the school will make a home visit. We will also make a home visit where there are continuous concerns about a pupil's/student's attendance or punctuality. Where possible, we will advise parents/carers that we intend to make a home visit, although this may not always be possible. The school will follow up any visits with letter or email.
- 9.4 The Trust recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, such as pupils/students with long term medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Trust's ambitions for these pupils/students is the same for any other and the Trust we will ensure that where necessary, additional support will be put in place to help them access full time education. Support to achieve

this may include involving the school's SENDCo, other relevant professionals and/or the Local Authority in order to develop individual approaches to meet an individual pupils' specific needs.

- 9.5 Where no sustained improvements in attendance or punctuality are demonstrated following appropriate support the Trust's schools will work in partnership with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Team to improve attendance/punctuality. This may result in formal or legal proceedings against parent/carers, including penalty notices.
- 9.6 You should refer to the [Trust's Attendance Management Procedure flowchart](#) for details of the specific stages of the procedure and the options available at each stage.
- 9.7 You should refer to the [Trust's Secondary Punctuality Management Procedure flowchart](#) for details of the specific daily procedure, termly consequence and staged sanctions that apply to instances of lateness in Trust Secondaries.

10. Reintegration following extended absence

- 10.1 When a pupil/student returns to school following a period of extended absence, a personalised plan will be developed detailing how the school will support an improvement in attendance. Referrals to other agencies may be required such as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), EPS (Education Psychology Services), EIT (Education Improvement Team) etc. This plan will be discussed with parents/carers to gain their commitments to the actions and improvements required.
- 10.2 If this plan shows that there will be a period of the school day when the pupil / student will not be attending school, then the appropriate phased re integration paperwork from the local authority must be completed and submitted. Phased integration plans should last for no longer than six weeks unless agreed as part of a multi-agency approach and always be in agreement with parents.
- 10.3 In the case of pupils/students with SEND this may require an Education Healthcare Plan, and in these circumstances relevant professionals will be involved in the planning of the pupil's/student's successful return (e.g. SENDCo, Health Professionals etc.). In these cases, a nominated member of staff will be the key contact to monitor and review the pupil's/student's return.

11. Attendance Strategy

- 11.1 Each school, will have a named Attendance Champion. The Attendance Champion will be a member of the school's senior leadership team. The Attendance Champion will have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- 11.2 The Attendance Champion will set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance and will regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.
- 11.3 The Trust will, through the attendance strategy be committed in reducing persistent and severe absence, including how to access wider support services will be provided to remove barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority (See **Appendix A – National Framework**).
- 11.4 Where voluntary support has not been effective and / or not been engaged with all of Pontefract Academies Trust Schools will work with the local authority to ensure the following:

- Put formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract or an education supervision order
- Issue a Notice to improve and / or penalty support notice
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe.
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate.

- 11.5 Celebrating and positively rewarding pupils/students for good attendance is part of the Trusts culture. Pontefract Academies Trust will ensure that excellent attendance will be rewarded through a variety of school initiatives. Such rewards will be awarded both collaboratively and individually on a daily, weekly, termly and annual basis as decided by the individual school.
- 11.6 Informal/formal rewards and praise should be used in each Trust school. This takes place in class/form times and assemblies; ensuring the importance of attendance is visible in every Trust school.
- 11.7 Pupils/students are active in their daily and weekly attendance statistics and discussions are held around good attendance habits and punctuality and the Trust ensures that expectations around attendance are communicated to all pupils/students.

12. Procedural Instruction Author

- 12.1 This Procedural Instruction and all associated guidance and forms are the responsibility of the **Director of Inclusion and Safeguarding**.

13. Procedural Instruction Approval

- 13.1 This Procedural Instruction is approved by the **Executive Leadership Team**. It became effective on 18/07/2025.

14. Procedural Instruction Review

- 14.1 This Procedural Instruction will be reviewed in line with the Procurement Policy it supports, every year.
- 14.2 As procedures are often subject to more frequent change, this Procedural Instruction will be updated to reflect any material changes to Attendance and Punctuality Procedures and will be re-presented to the Executive Leadership Team for approval at that time.
- 14.3 The formal review date applicable aligned to the associated Attendance and Punctuality Policy will be maintained irrespective of these updates, however the date of approval will be amended to reflect the most recent update.
- 14.4 Where a formal review results in no material changes, the previous effective date will continue to apply, however the last review date will be specified in this section.

14.5 This Procedural Instruction was last reviewed on 18/07/2025.

15. Procedural Instruction Distribution

15.1 This Procedural Instruction will be made available via:

- The Trust Website
- School Websites
- The Compliance Library

16. Version Control

16.1 The changes to this Procedural Instruction over time will be documented on Every.

16.2 If you spot any broken links or errors within these procedural instructions, please report this to clerk@patrust.org.uk.

Appendix A - Changes to Penalty Notices for School Absence from 19th August 2024 – National Framework

The new National Framework introduces consistency in the use of Penalty Notices across England by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered. The framework increases the amount of the Penalty Notice and introduces a new national limit of 2 Penalty Notices within a 3-year rolling period to break cycles of repeat offending.

In line with the guidance, Ponterfract Academies Trust will prioritise the 'support first' approach expecting that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate. However, Penalty Notices can be issued without a Notice to Improve in cases where support is not appropriate (such as leave of absence in term time) or when support has not been engaged with.

Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child at the below rates.

- **First offence:** The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- **Second Offence (within 3 years):** The second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years):** The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Leave of Absence (Holidays)

Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non- consecutive. In line with the National Framework, the Local Authority retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking multiple term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, or a combination of non-attendance due to leave of absence and unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. In these circumstances a Notice to Improve may be sent by the Local Authority on behalf of the school, this will stipulate the support that has already been implemented and the ongoing support that is available to the parent and child to improve school attendance. The Notice to Improve will also detail the expected improvements that must be made over a set time frame to prevent the Penalty Notice being issued.

Further information on the National Framework can be found within [Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024](#). The National Framework comes into effect from 19th August 2024.

Appendix B – Attendance Codes

Attendance Codes

Attendance codes are changing from the 19 August 2024 so this will come into effect for the new academic year 2024/2025 for Pontefract Academy Trust Schools.

This is a list of attendance codes that come into effect in the next academic year for all schools:

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
/	Present (AM)	Present for school morning session
\	Present (PM)	Present for school afternoon session
B	Attending any other Approved Education Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity. Not to be used for Virtual learning
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered	Dual registered to another school
E	Suspended or excluded without alternative provision	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence as pupil on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days more than an agreed family holiday
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Alternative provision provided by LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason absence not yet established
O	Absence in other or unknown circumstance	Absence in other or unknown circumstance
P	Participating in sports activity	Participating in sports activity
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance	Religious observance
S	Study leave for public examination	Study leave for public examination
T	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes
U	Late (after registers closed)	Late (after registers closed)
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience	Attending work experience
X	Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil	Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil
Y1	Unable to attend – Transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel emergency	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
Y4	Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole schools' site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend – Public Health Guidance / Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil not on roll	Prospective pupil not on admission requester
#	Planned whole school closure	Planned whole school closure

This is a list of codes where a reason will be required with the attendance code:

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
B	Educated off-site (not Dual-Reg)	Attending any other approved educational facility.
K	Alternative provision provided by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.

Retired Codes no longer in use after 19th August 2024

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday.
J	Interview	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance
Y	Unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance