Pate's Grammar School
Policy

Attendance

Approved by:	Pupil and Wellbeing Committee	Date: February 2022
Last reviewed on:		
Next review due by: October 2023		

Contents

1. Aims

The School expects students to attend every session that the school is open. At Pate's we have generally very high levels of student attendance. Regular attendance helps students to make good progress, enjoy learning and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing. We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend all sessions that the school is open and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

This policy sets out our expectations regarding attendance and explains how we will track and address absence.

The school will look to engage help from other external agencies, or the Education and Inclusion officer at the Local Authority (LA) if deemed appropriate.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The People and Wellbeing committee of the governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headmaster to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headmaster

The Headmaster is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The School Office

The school office:

- Takes calls from parents about absence and record it on the school MIS system.
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the SLT Strategic Lead for Attendance and Heads of Year
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Works with Heads of Year to tackle persistent absence, including working with External agencies and Education and Inclusion officer at the Local Authority (LA) where required.

3.4 Form Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 Students

The school expects all students to attend every session that the school is open.

There are various methods parents/guardians can use to inform the school of an unplanned absence e.g., illness, last minute medical appointment. Please contact the school before 9.00am, **on each day of absence**, so that the register can be marked accordingly.

- Phone the school absence line on 01242 538289, select option 1 to leave a message, or
- Email absence@patesgs.org or
- Via the school website Parent Portal here, or
- Via the Schoolgateway App or desktop

After registration closes each morning, and registers have been updated, parents/guardians will be contacted by text if a student has not registered at school and the school has not received confirmation of an unplanned absence.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

· Present

· Attending an approved off-site educational activity

· Absent

· Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

· The original entry

· The amended entry

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:40 and will be kept open until 08:45. The register for the second session will be taken at 14:40 and will be kept open until 14:45.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Please refer to Appendix 2 and 3 for full details.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the school has concerns about a student's absences, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done via the school website.

Please refer to Appendix 2 and 3 for full details.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence and should do so as far in advance as possible. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Ongoing punctuality issues will be investigated by the Head of Year of the student concerned.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason. The school office will telephone the parents on the first day of unexplained absence.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Measures to address increasing and persistent absence are outlined in 5.2 below.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers are able to access their child's attendance record online through the School Gateway Portal.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headmaster will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as family reasons or high level extra-curricular commitments. A leave of absence is granted at the Headmaster's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing absence

Parents who have any concerns about their son/daughter's attendance should contact the school immediately.

The school expects all students to attend every session the school is open. A student may not be able to attend due to acceptable reasons, however, if there are no obvious reasons given for absence, then this will be investigated.

Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated into the school through an individualised program based on their needs.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

In order to reduce persistent absence, the school will follow the procedure below:

Stage	Action
1	An attendance letter will be sent home to parents where appropriate
2	A phone call will be made between the Head of Year and parents to discuss why student attendance is below the expected level.
3	The head of year will invite parents into school for a meeting to discuss strategies to encourage student attendance and to outline the implications of attendance not improving. We will contact external agencies including the Education and Inclusion officer at the LA.
4	The case will be referred to the Educational Inclusion Team at the local authority. We will work with them to support each student to attend.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority (LA) can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This is per parent per child.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headmaster, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance at school is promoted in a variety of ways. Firstly, this will be through Form tutors and Heads of Year working with students in tutor time and assemblies to promote the wider benefit of attending school. This includes presence in lessons being the most effective way for students to make progress in their learning, but also the wider mental and physical health benefits of coming to school.

The SLT Strategic Lead will work with Heads of Year to monitor attendance data over time in all year groups.

The school will work together with local authority staff, attendance support workers, and local health services (including GPs and school nurses) to reassure families and ensure as many pupils are attending school as possible.

7. Attendance monitoring

- The School Office monitors pupil absence on a daily basis and will contact parents on the first day of absence if notification has not been received from them.
- Attendance patterns will be monitored by Strategic Lead for Attendance who will work with Heads of Year to promote good attendance.
- The pupil's parent/carer is expected to contact the school each day their child is ill.

- If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The SLT Strategic Lead for attendance will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.
- Unauthorised attendance will be investigated and reported to the Headmaster.
- Half Termly attendance trends will be reviewed and discussed at Pastoral board once per half term.
- Governors will review attendance trends termly through the People & Wellbeing Committee.

Attendance data is stored on SIMS to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils or groups over time.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and will be reviewed every two years by the SLT Strategic Lead for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the People and Wellbeing committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour policy

Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code Definition Scenario

/ Present (am) Pupil is present at morning registration

\ Present (pm) Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L Late arrival Pupil arrives late before register has closed

B Off-site educational activity Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

D Dual registered Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

J Interview Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P Sporting activity Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

V Educational trip or visit Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

W Work experience Pupil is on a work experience placement

X Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Authorised absence

C Authorised leave of absence Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E Excluded Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H Authorised holiday Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I Illness School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M Medical/dental appointment Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R Religious observance Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S Study leave Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

T Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence

G Unauthorised holiday Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

N Reason not provided Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

O Unauthorised absence School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

U Arrival after registration Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code Definition Scenario

X Not required to be in school Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

Z Pupil not on admission register. Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

Planned school closure Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 - Published Attendance procedures for years 7-11 Students

Registration

Students need to understand that attendance is compulsory and imperative if they are to realise their full potential. This is for all lessons where they need to arrive on time, with the appropriate equipment, ready to learn.

At the start of the day students should enter the school via the designated student entrances using the biometric scanners. The main entrance door to the school into the main Reception area is not a designated student entrance at the beginning and end of the school day. An exception to this is students leaving or returning to school throughout the day who may use the main entrance door into Reception in order to sign in and out.

Students are expected to be in their form rooms by 8.40am for registration. If students are in school but miss registration in the morning or at the start of Period 5 for any reason e.g., music lessons, seeing a member of staff, they must sign in at Reception to ensure that they are marked as present.

Students arriving at school **after** 8.40am must sign in at the reception desk so the register can be updated accordingly.

Students are registered at tutor time each morning and for each lesson throughout the day. For Games, PE, TPM and IAG lessons this can be done using the fobs on the biometric scanners around the school.

Year 7 – 11 students are not allowed to leave the school during the day unless permission has been requested by parents/guardians in advance. The procedures for unplanned absences and requesting permission to be absent are as follows.

Unplanned Absence Procedure:

There are various methods parents/guardians can use to inform the school of an unplanned absence e.g., illness, last minute medical appointment. Please contact the school before 9.00am, **on each day of absence**, so that the register can be marked accordingly.

- Phone the school absence line on 01242 538289, select option 1 to leave a message, or
- Email absence@patesgs.org or
- Via the school website Parent Portal here, or
- Via the Schoolgateway App or desktop

After registration closes each morning, and registers have been updated, parents/guardians will be contacted by text if a student has not registered at school and the school has not received confirmation of an unplanned absence.

Planned Absence Requests for appointments

Requests for leave of absence during the school day, to keep appointments with doctors, dentists, music exams etc. should be made where possible in advance by **one** of the following channels

- Via the school website parent portal here
- Via Schoolgateway App or desktop
- Complete a paper request form - download here or students can pick up a paper copy from Reception to bring home for completion.

Completed forms should be submitted by hand at Reception or electronically to absence@patesgs.org. A signed permission slip confirming the absence notification has been received by the Attendance Office will be returned to students at the time of submission or via their Tutor Registers or an email confirmation will be sent to parents. A central diary of all agreed absences is kept by the Attendance Office.

Once permission is granted, students leaving school during the day must sign out at Reception and hand in the completed permission slip. On returning to school students must sign in again at Reception.

Absence requests for a day or more

Applications for a longer period of time away from school should be kept to an absolute minimum. Family holidays should not be taken during term time. Requests for time off must be made well in advance and will be considered by the Head of Year in consultation with the Headmaster or SLT Strategic Lead for Attendance. Such requests will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and consequently parents/guardians are asked not to make travel plans until the requested absence has been agreed. Longer term absence request forms can be accessed here.

Guidelines for students who have missed lessons

Teaching staff will be happy to help students catch up on work missed due to illness or other agreed absences but the responsibility to follow up work is down to the student. Please remember that staff do not always access emails during the school day or are in a position to respond to email requests for missed work on the day of receipt. Students are encouraged to speak in person to either a buddy or teaching staff rather than expect work to be emailed.

Covid related absence

When students are isolating for Covid related reasons and are well enough to join lessons, but others in the same year group are in school then we will 'stream' the lessons via Teams, in either an audio or video format. Students will need to log into Teams at the correct time and also access any additional resources.

In the case of authorised absence for a day or more – non Covid related

Students should ensure that they see teachers before the planned absence and collect any work they are asked to do during their time away.

Following a short-term absence due to illness – non Covid related

Students can arrange for a friend to pick up work and make a note of class and homework. On their return to school students should speak to their teachers in person to collect any other work missed and check what needs to be completed. There is no expectation that staff will repeat missed lessons individually.

Students away from school on a regular basis, or attending part-time on a pre-agreed timetable

Arrangements will be made on an individual basis to support students who might be on a reduced or flexible timetable to ensure that they access any work missed due to the agreed absence.

We take our commitment to ensuring that no student falls behind in their education very seriously, and will endeavour to work with students, parents/guardians and other agencies to ensure that we support all students to the best of our ability.

Appendix 3 - Published Attendance procedures for sixth form Students

Registration: Students are registered in each individual lesson as well as in their tutor groups at 8.40 am. Parents are informed when their son/daughter are absent from morning registration and fails to turn up to a timetabled lesson.

Absence Notification: please either phone the Sixth Form attendance Officer direct on 01242 538281 (or school number x 281) or contact the school via the School Gateway app or email sixthform@patesgs.org.

Absence Procedure (Illness): in all cases of absence due to illness parents should notify the Sixth Form Attendace Officer on the first day, and any subsequent days, of absence. If the absence is lengthy a further letter may also be required.

Planned Absence Procedure (Other Reasons – Not Illness): students need to advise us of any anticipated absences. This can be done by emailing sixthform@patesgs.org or by signing the Planned Absence Form in the Sixth Form Centre. Examples of planned absences are medical appointments, university visits & interviews etc. These absences may need to be confirmed by parents.

Leave of Absence Requests: family holidays should not be taken in term time. All requests for absence due to other causes should be emailed to sixthform@patesgs.org in advance of the proposed absence, where they will be reviewed by Head of Year.

University Open Day Visits: students are allowed 2 days out of school during the academic year to visit universities (excluding school-run trips).

Medical Appointments: wherever possible, appointments should not be made in school time. Where unavoidable, school must be informed in advance (see planned absences). These absences may need to be confirmed by letter/appointment card.

Driving Lessons and Tests: students must not miss school to take driving lessons. However, lessons may be taken on those afternoons where there are no further commitments. We understand that there is little control over your test dates, but we will need a copy of the letter/email.

Catching Up on Work Missed: it is the student's responsibility to keep up with any work missed and appoint a "study buddy" to take notes, save hand-outs etc. If the absence exceeds three days, the sixth form team will notify the teaching staff in order for work to be sent home.

Unauthorised Absences: can be viewed and dealt with on School Gateway.

SIGNING IN AND OUT DURING THE DAY

Outside the Sixth Form attendance Officer's office on the first floor of the Sixth Form Centre there are lists to 'Sign in Late', 'Sign Out Early' and advise of 'Planned Absences'. Please use them.

Arriving Late: all students who arrive late for school and have missed registration should, immediately on arrival and before going to lessons, sign in at the Sixth Form Centre. Not doing so may result in an "absent without known cause" record for the day. All absences and non-attendance of lessons will be checked daily and followed up as necessary.

Leaving Early: make sure you sign out before leaving school early for any reason.

Break & Lunchtime Arrangements: sixth formers may leave the school premises at break and lunchtime provided they sign out first, do not behave in such a way that could bring discredit to the school, and sign in on their return. Sixth formers are not allowed off the school premises during free study periods before lunchtime.

Leaving at Lunchtime: sixth formers may go home after Period 4, provided they have no afternoon lessons or further commitments in school. Again, students should sign out first. All such leaving early is further dependent on parents/carers giving permission for their child to leave school during school hours. You will be prompted for this information when you confirm your place in Y12 and complete your enrolment after Results Day

If You Feel Unwell: If you are unwell, you must find a member of the sixth form team to discuss your options. If appropriate, report to your subject teacher and explain. If going home, you must sign out first. On no account should you absent yourself from lessons and go home without informing anyone. There is a sick room available should you need a quiet space - please go to the main school reception if you do.