



Exeter

Pre-Prep School

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Attendance Policy

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Next review date:	September 2024

This policy applies equally to all pupils across the school, including EYFS.

Introduction

It is essential that all children attend school regularly in order to benefit from their education. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance records tend to achieve less in their time with us.

The government states that schools should:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ensure every pupil has high levels of attendance so they can access the education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence;
- encourage parents to perform their legal duties by ensuring their child attends school regularly;
- ensure all pupils are punctual to lessons.

The regulations covering school admissions and attendance are very prescriptive, reflecting the importance that successive governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school.

School timetable

7.30am	Early Birds (additional cost)
8.30am	Official opening hours – children may go to class
8.50am	Registration takes place. All children should now be in class. Registers close at 9.00am. Arrival after 9.00am needs to be recorded in the late arrivals folder stored at the front signing-in desk
12.00 noon	Nursery session ends
12.00-1.10pm	Lunchtime for pupils attending the whole day
1.10pm	Afternoon registration – afternoon session begins
3.30pm	Official end of the school day
3.30-5.30pm	Late room available (additional cost)

Pupils are registered at both the start of the morning and afternoon sessions each day.

Notifying the school of illness

If an occasion arises where your child is ill, please telephone the school (01392 496 122) before 9:00am each and every day of absence. If the school has not heard from a parent or guardian, we will always telephone, in line with our safeguarding policy. We ask that you make contact with us each day your child is going to be absent in order that we can keep our records updated and, importantly, so that we can keep abreast of the child's progress to full health and anticipated return date.

Late arrival

It is essential that, if a pupil arrives late, they are signed in so that our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times. Registers are returned to the office at 9.00am, so please ensure you inform the school office if you arrive after this time, so that registers can be marked accordingly.

Leaving school early during the day

Pupils are not normally allowed to leave the site during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff for a trip. If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or you are collecting them for a medical appointment, please sign out using the signing-out folder stored on the table just inside the main entrance. Again, this ensures that we know who is on our premises at any one time.

Requests for absence

If you wish to request an absence for any planned appointment or event, please make the request using our absence request form, which can be downloaded from the parent area of the school website. The school office will also be happy to provide a copy on request.

Compassionate grounds or exceptional circumstances

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances should be made in writing to the Head in advance of the proposed absence when possible. The absence request form can also be used for this purpose. Please note that absence in exceptional circumstances do not include the following:

- birthdays;
- holidays;
- days out as a special treat;
- other family celebrations.

Authorising absence

The government has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. The main areas where the school will authorise absence are given below:

1. Illness

Where schools accept that a pupil is ill, they must authorise the absence, but can request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness.

2. Appointments

Dental and medical appointments are authorised absences but, where possible, such appointments should be made out of school hours.

3. Holidays

The regulations state that time off for family holidays is not a right. Parents do not have the right to take a child out of school during term time. By law, parents must ask prior permission for their child to miss school. The regulations do not allow the school to give retrospective approval. The Head is only able to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday and you could face prosecution if you take your child out of school without permission. Holidays which are taken for the following reasons will definitely not be authorised:

- availability of cheap holidays;
- availability of desired accommodation;
- poor weather in school holiday periods;
- overlap with the beginning or end of term.

4. Religious observance

The school will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the school may seek confirmation from that religious body that the day has been set apart for religious observance.

5. Exceptional circumstances/unavoidable causes

Authorised absence will be granted for compassionate reasons, such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

Poor attendance

The Department for Education expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of approximately 90% and above. Any figure below this is deemed as poor attendance. There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

Persistent absentees

The Department for Education has changed the definition of 'Persistent Absence' to deal with the reality of pupil absenteeism in schools and its impact on their learning. The Department has reduced the threshold at which a pupil is defined as 'Persistently Absent' to 15%. Pupils whose attendance falls below 85% are now officially classed as 'Persistent Absentees'. The school will be obliged to contact the parents if their child's attendance drops below that figure. If attendance does not improve and absence continues to be persistent, the school will contact external bodies for support.

Registers

Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers: an admissions register, known as the School Roll, and an attendance register. School inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

Guidelines for ISI inspection state that, "The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006".

Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and during the afternoon for all day pupils. The regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained.

Attendance registration system

The school uses a manual registration system which is closely monitored. This enables the school to record, report and monitor pupil attendance and absence.

Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities

The school's attendance register is monitored daily and records are retained for three years after the end of the school year in question. There is no longer a requirement for independent schools to return absence data to the DfE.

All Independent Schools Council (ISC) membership schools take part in that organisation's annual census of pupils, staff and expenditure, etc. From January 2009 it has been mandatory to include pupil ethnic monitoring data using the same methodology as the maintained sector.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools may therefore receive an enquiry about whether they are educating a specific child. Schools are required to alert their local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has:

- been absent without authority for 10 consecutive school days;
- failed to attend school regularly; or
- been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing.