

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to set out the academy's approach to attendance, as well as update you with regards to changes made by the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to how attendance is managed.

The DfE's guidance identifies that pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. The government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (a child is considered to be persistently absent if their attendance drops below 90%). In the event that you have any concerns about your child attending the academy, please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss available support. Through working together, we can achieve the best outcomes for your child.

The table below shows the number of days absence over a year that equate to each percentage absence.

Percentage Attendance	Approximate number of days absent (per year)
95%	10 x days; 20 x sessions (2 x weeks)
90%	19 x days; 38 x sessions (nearly 4 x weeks)
85%	29 x days; 58 x sessions (nearly 6 x weeks)

As an academy, our aspiration for all pupils is that their attendance is 100%, in order for them to get the best from their learning. I understand that there may be times when absence is unavoidable. However, where it is avoidable, I ask that you work with the academy and ensure your child(ren) is/are in school. In line with the new DfE National Framework, penalty notices can be used by all schools where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 sessions within the Autumn Term of the next academic year).

Please be aware that the new DfE National Framework sets out the following with regards to a penalty notice:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Penalty Notice in a 3-year period:	Issued to each parent. Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days. £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Penalty Notice in a 3-year period:	Issued to each parent. Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Penalty Notice in a 3-year period:	Alternative action should be taken, for example, prosecution or other attendance legal interventions. Fines per parent are capped at two within any three-year period. If a parent is prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, they could face a magistrate's court appearance and a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison.

Our Attendance Policy can be found on our website (Trust Policies – Attendance), or you can use this [link](#). The policy outlines who you can contact for support with attendance.

I would like to draw your attention to the following government legislation:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school, the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled, Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty.

Punctuality to school is also vitally important. Pupils who arrive late to the academy have an unsettled start to the day and this can disrupt their own learning, as well as that of their peers. In addition, punctuality is a key life skill, that we are keen to promote and reinforce. As a result, persistent lateness will be challenged, and sanctioned where appropriate. I would urge you to contact the academy if you feel you would benefit from any support around this.

We encourage scheduling medical appointments outside of school hours, but we do understand that it is not always feasible. If an appointment is required during the school day, please take only the essential time away from school to minimise disruptions to your child's education.

In respect of holidays during term time, in line with our [Attendance Policy](#) and the DfE guidance, the academy can grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances at our discretion. Parents/Carers who believe they have exceptional circumstances must make a request for a leave of absence to the Headteacher no less than one month prior to the holiday (a form can be obtained from the academy reception). If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the academy to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional, and permission to take a term-time holiday is not granted by the Headteacher but the holiday is still taken, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and your child's attendance may reach the threshold for consideration of a penalty notice.

As a reminder, if your child is unable to attend the academy, please ensure that you notify us as soon as possible. by calling 01522 751040 prior to 9am or emailing [pembrokeadmin@prioryacademies.co.uk](mailto:pembrokeadmin@prioryacademies.co.uk). If your child's absence goes beyond one day, we need to be contacted on each subsequent day of absence.

I would like to thank you for your continued support with your child(ren)'s education.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H Spoors". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Helen Spoors  
Headteacher

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Lindsay Empson". The signature is more complex and stylized than the one on the left, with a large loop at the beginning.

Lindsay Empson Assistant Headteacher  
Designated Safeguard and Attendance Lead