Attendance and Truancy Policy

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Contents:

Statement of intent

Paxman Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Students cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. At Paxman Academy we aim for all students to have 97% attendance or above.

We are committed to:

> Promoting and modelling good attendance.
> Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
> Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
> Rewarding regular attendance.
> Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:
> "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:
>> o   to age, ability and aptitude and
>> o   to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

1.   Legal framework

1.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

> Education Act 1996
> Equality Act 2010
> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
> DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
> DfE (2016) 'Children Missing Education'
> DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
> DfE (2021_ 'Improving school attendance: support for school and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
> Complaints Procedure Policy
> Children Missing Education Policy
> Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
> Behaviour for Learning Policy

2.   Definitions

2.1 The school defines "absence" as either:

> Arrival at school after the register has closed.
> Not attending school for any reason.

2.2 The school defines an "authorised absence" as:

> An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
> Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
> Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
> An absence due to a family emergency.

2.3 The school defines an "unauthorised absence" as:

> Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without   reason.

> Truancy before or during the school day.
> Absences which have not been properly explained.
> Arrival at school after the register has closed.
> Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
> Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
> Leaving school for no reason during the day.

2.4 The school defines "persistent absenteeism (PA)" as:

> Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

3.   Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governance Committee has overall responsibility for:

> Monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the school.
> Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
> Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.
> Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2020) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
> Ensuring that there is a Children Missing in Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

3.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

> The day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to parents.
> Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
> Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

3.3 Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:

> Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
> Modelling good attendance behaviour.
> Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

3.4 Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session.

3.5 The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

> Are being educated from home.
> No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
> Have an authorised medical note.
> Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
> Have been permanently excluded.

3.6 Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their children during term-time.

3.7 Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure their children attend school every day.

3.8 Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

3.9 All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

4. Training of staff

4.1 We recognise that early intervention can prevent bad behaviour. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their inductions and annual refresher training.

4.2 Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Secondary Attendance and Truancy Policy as part of their new starter induction.

4.3 Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupil expectations

5.1 Pupils will be expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year.

5.2 The school expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.

5.3 Pupils will be expected to report any absence immediately to the relevant member of staff.

6. Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

6.1 The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

6.2 In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing PA, the SLT will:
- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviewed in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Having a weekly tutor review.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
  - Creating attendance clinics.

6.3 The governance committee will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

6.4 Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:
- Welcome the pupil back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with the pupil to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.

> Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

6.5 Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

6.6 The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

> Children in need
> LAC
> Pupils who are eligible for FSM
> Pupils with EAL
> Pupils with SEND

7. Absence procedures

7.1 Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence. This should be done prior to 9:00am.

7.2 Parents are required to send a note on the first day their child returns with a signed explanation as to why they were absent. This must be done even if we have already received a phone call. In some cases, we may request medical evidence for the absence to be authorised.

7.3 Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

7.4 A telephone call made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

7.5 The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

> Ascertain the reason for the absence.
> Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
> Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
> Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

7.6 In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Pastoral Manager or Head of Year.

7.7 The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

7.8 If a pupil's attendance drops below 85 percent it is likely a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents. This meeting will likely include Attendance Solutions and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

7.9 Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

8. Parental involvement

8.1 The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will

liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

8.2 Parents will be expected to:

> Treat staff with respect.
> Actively support the work of the school.
> Call staff for help when they need it.
> Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

9. Contact information

9.1 Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.

9.2 Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

9.3 Parents must provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.

10. Attendance register

10.1 The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

> Present.
> Absent.
> Attending an approved educational visit.
> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

10.2 The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

> / = Present in the morning
> \ = Present in the afternoon
> L = Late arrival before the register has closed
> C = Authorised absence
> E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
> H = Authorised holiday
> I = Illness
> M = Medical or dental appointments
> R = Religious observance
> B = Off-site educational activity
> G = Unauthorised holiday
> O = Unauthorised absence
> U = Arrived after registration closed
> N = Reason not yet provided
> X = Not required to be in school
> S = Study leave
> T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
> W = Work experience
> V = Educational visit or trip
> P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
> J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
> D – Dual registered – at another educational establishment
> Y = Exceptional circumstances
> Z – Pupil not on admission register

10.3 When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example: induction days.

10.4 All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

10.5 Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

11. Pastoral Manager / Head of Year / Assistant Headteacher

11.1 If pupils are persistently absent, any of the above-mentioned staff will attempt to resolve the situation through parental communication following the flow diagram at the end of the policy.

11.2 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the school has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices. This will involve Attendance Solutions.

11.3 This process is outlined in our Attendance monitoring procedures.

12. Lateness

12.1 Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.

12.2 The school day starts at 8.35am; pupils should be in form rooms at this time.

12.3 Registers are taken by 8.50am; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils will also receive a C1 sanction if they are late.

12.4 The register closes at 9.30am; pupils will receive an absence mark if they do not attend school before this time.

12.5 Pupils who enter the site after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

12.6 The school will communicate with parents if there are any concerns about lateness. Persistent lateness will lead to sanctions being issued to students.

13. Truancy

13.1 Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

13.2 All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

13.3 All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.35am and 12.20pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically for morning and afternoon registration.

13.4 Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return.

13.5 Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting.

13.6 If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher will be notified and they will contact the child's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

13.7 The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

> In the first instance, a warning letter will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
> If any truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
> A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.
> If any further truancy occurs, then a meeting will take place at the school with the pupil and parents to seek a solution moving forward.
> Attendance Solutions may be involved and a penalty notice may be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parent-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

14. Missing children

14.1 Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Headteacher.

14.2 The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:

> The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the office immediately.
> The office staff will liaise with the relevant staff members to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts.
> A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
> The following areas will be systematically searched:
>   o All classrooms
>   o All toilets
>   o Changing rooms
>   o The library
>   o The school grounds
> Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
> If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
> The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.
> If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.
> The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

14.3 If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

14.4 When the pupil has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

14.5 The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

14.6 Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

14.7 The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

14.8 Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

15. Term-time leave

15.1 Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

15.2 Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness.

15.3 Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

15.4 Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

> During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the school, unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
> Immediately before and during assessment periods
> When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
> Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

15.5 If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions such as a penalty notice.

16. Religious observances

16.1 The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.

16.2 Parents must inform the school in at least 7 days advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

16.3 The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

17. Appointments

17.1 As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

17.2 Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school.

17.3 If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent.

17.4 Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

18. Young carers

18.1 The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school.

18.2 The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

19. Exceptional circumstances

19.1 When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.

19.2 Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

> The school is fully or partially closed.
> Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
> There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
> The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

19.3 The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

20. Rewarding good attendance

20.1 The school acknowledges and celebrates 100 percent attendance:

20.2 Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded. This will be organised by the Pastoral Manager and Head of Year for each year group.

20.3 School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away.

21. Monitoring and review

21.1 The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
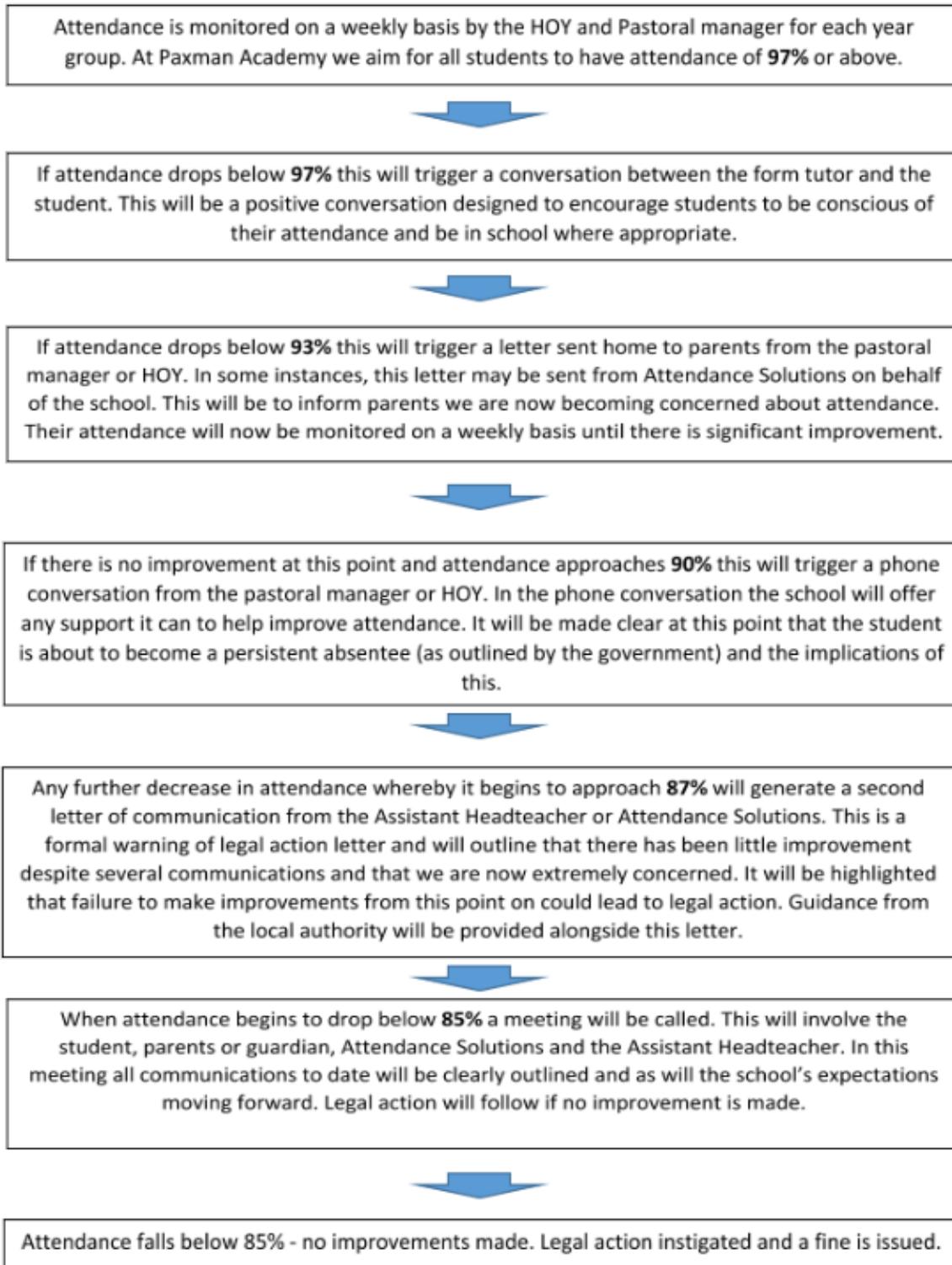
21.2 The school's attendance target is 97 percent each year.

21.3 This policy will be reviewed annually.

21.4 Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff and will go through Governors.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

The flow chart below highlights the typical procedure we follow with regards to student attendance at the school. It should be noted that every student is dealt with as an individual case and therefore this process may vary from one student to another.

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by the HOY and Pastoral manager for each year group. At Paxman Academy we aim for all students to have attendance of **97%** or above.

If attendance drops below **97%** this will trigger a conversation between the form tutor and the student. This will be a positive conversation designed to encourage students to be conscious of their attendance and be in school where appropriate.

If attendance drops below **93%** this will trigger a letter sent home to parents from the pastoral manager or HOY. In some instances, this letter may be sent from Attendance Solutions on behalf of the school. This will be to inform parents we are now becoming concerned about attendance. Their attendance will now be monitored on a weekly basis until there is significant improvement.

If there is no improvement at this point and attendance approaches **90%** this will trigger a phone conversation from the pastoral manager or HOY. In the phone conversation the school will offer any support it can to help improve attendance. It will be made clear at this point that the student is about to become a persistent absentee (as outlined by the government) and the implications of this.

Any further decrease in attendance whereby it begins to approach **87%** will generate a second letter of communication from the Assistant Headteacher or Attendance Solutions. This is a formal warning of legal action letter and will outline that there has been little improvement despite several communications and that we are now extremely concerned. It will be highlighted that failure to make improvements from this point on could lead to legal action. Guidance from the local authority will be provided alongside this letter.

When attendance begins to drop below **85%** a meeting will be called. This will involve the student, parents or guardian, Attendance Solutions and the Assistant Headteacher. In this meeting all communications to date will be clearly outlined and as will the school's expectations moving forward. Legal action will follow if no improvement is made.

Attendance falls below 85% - no improvements made. Legal action instigated and a fine is issued.

Attendance Agreement Forms

Student Attendance Agreement

I, <**name of student**>, agree to attend school and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below 100 percent. I will ensure that Paxman Academy is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend, and will give the school full details of my absence.

As a student of Paxman Academy, I am dedicated to:

Being in attendance every day.
Always being punctual to school and lessons.
Informing the school of the reason for any absence.
Not missing school for trivial reasons.

Student:	Date:
Form Tutor:	Date:

Parental Attendance Agreement

I, <**name of parent**>, understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to school. I agree to send my child to school every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When my child is absent from school due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Parent:	Date:
Form Tutor:	Date: