

Prestwick Academy Attendance and Late-coming Policy 2020/21

Information for Pupils, Parents and Carers



Excellent attendance gives your child the best chance of success!



Foreword

There is a strong connection between regular attendance at school and the achievement of pupils. Prestwick Academy places a high value on attendance at school to ensure all children and young people are able to achieve their full potential. Attending school and taking part in learning – wherever learning takes place – is fundamental to making sure that children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

It is the legal duty of every parent or guardian under The Education (Scotland) Act 1980, (Section 30) to provide efficient education for their child who is of school age. Parents/guardians failing in the above duty make themselves liable to prosecution in terms of Section 43 of The Education (Scotland) Act 1980. Parents/guardians who fail to meet this duty can face a fine of up to £1000, or imprisonment, or both.

Once you enrol your child at a local education authority school the law says the child must attend unless the parent has permission from the education authority to withdraw the child from school.

It is our job to prepare young people for the world of work and as such we place great importance on the value of excellent attendance.



Pupil Expectations

Pupils are expected to be at school for **8.42am** every morning when a warning bell will sound to indicate that they should go to Personal Support.

Pupils should be in Personal Support by **8.45am** at the very latest.

If a pupil is late they should sign-in at the **School Office** before attending their timetabled class.

Between classes pupils should move from one class to the other as quickly as possible. If a pupil is late to class between periods their teacher will record them as late on SEEMIS.

Pupils should not go to lockers or the toilet between periods.

Pupils feeling unwell and wishing to be sent home should discuss this with their class teacher who can fill out a medical slip if required. The pupil should then report to the school office for assessment. A parent/emergency contact will be called if necessary. The appropriate attendance code will be updated on SEEMIS. It is essential that pupils follow these steps, including senior pupils.

All pupils should note that attendance at school means being in a classroom learning as per their timetable, simply being in the school building does not count as attendance.

S6 Pupils

S6 pupils who have a study period first thing in the morning are permitted to work from home until **their first timetabled class**. Pupils **MUST** attend school on time for their first class of the day and they **MUST** sign-in at the school office when they arrive to school.

S6 pupils who have study periods throughout the day **MUST** register their attendance using the **QR code** located within identified study classrooms. This will indicate their presence in the school and location. This will also assist with **Track & Trace** during the current Covid-19 climate.

Expectations of Parents and Carers

Parents/carers should encourage pupils to attend school on a daily basis and on time. Excellent attendance gives your child the best chance of success, ensuring their full potential is achieved.

Parents/carers should contact the school office before 9am if their child is going to be absent to explain why.

If a child has a medical/dental appointment, parents/carers should provide their child with a note (for the school office) in advance of the appointment so that it can be recorded on SEEMIS. Alternatively, if appointments are short notice parents should phone the school office with this information.

If a parent/carer forgets to phone the school to explain an absence, they will be alerted to the absence by text message which they can respond to.

Alternatively, an e-mail can be sent to prestwick.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk or an absence note can be sent in with the child when they return to school; this should be handed in during Personal Support. When providing a note please include the pupil's name, registration class and reason for the absence.

ALL ABSENCES MUST BE EXPLAINED.

When an absence remains unexplained it will be recorded as unauthorised. In these instances a member of the school office may contact the parent/carer to enquire as to the reason for the absence.

Where a pupil is likely to be off school for an extended period of time parents should contact their child's Guidance Teacher to arrange for work to be sent home (if appropriate) and to discuss support in returning to school.

Parents/carers should try to arrange holidays during the allocated school holidays to avoid disruption to their child's learning. This is especially important during the Senior Phase. Please inform the school in advance of any planned holiday during term time but be advised that this will be recorded as an **unauthorised** absence in accordance with South Ayrshire Council's attendance guidelines.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contact their child's Guidance Teacher where there is an indication that attendance at school is becoming an issue for

their child. Early intervention is extremely important in these circumstances and there are many ways the school can support your child.

Education Support Officer

If your child's attendance falls below 90% or their Guidance Teacher has concerns about your child's attendance you may receive a visit at home from our Education Support Officer. The purpose of this visit will be to offer support and advice on your child returning to school.

Authorised absence

When your child is absent from school this can be recorded by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. As long as you have informed the school of the reason why your child is off, and the school is satisfied that this is a valid reason, this is recorded as an authorised absence.

Absence is authorised in the following circumstances:

- Your child is ill
- Your child is attending a doctor or hospital appointment
- A meeting about a Children's Hearing or court, or attending a Children's Hearing, care review or court
- Participation in debates, sports, musical or drama activities as long as this is agreed in advance by the school
- Attending a religious ceremony or a wedding or funeral of someone very close to them
- Someone close to your child has died
- There is a crisis or serious difficulty at home or in your family
- You are a Gypsy/Traveller family and your child's school is aware of your plans to travel and return
- Your family is returning to a country of origin for cultural reasons or to care for a relative
- The school transport your child uses is cancelled due to bad weather, breakdown, etc.

Unauthorised Absence

Schools will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Any unexplained absence unless you later provide a satisfactory explanation
- Most family holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Where the school does not agree there is a satisfactory reason for absence even if you have provided an explanation
- Truancy, with or without your knowledge
- During disputes, such as relating to the return of a pupil after an exclusion
- Long-term exceptional domestic circumstances where support has been provided.

Action to deal with persistent non-attendance

If your child does not attend school regularly without a satisfactory explanation being provided, Prestwick Academy will take a staged approach to try to remedy the situation. The stages are:

Stage 1

You are informed by letter if your child's unauthorised absence falls below 90%.

Stage 2

If there is no improvement within 2 weeks a further letter will be sent.

Stage 3

If there is no improvement within a week after this you will be invited to attend a meeting with your child's House Team to establish the reasons for the continuing low attendance and how to address these. This may take the form of a **TAC** (Team Around the Child) meeting and outside agencies may be invited if necessary.

Stage 4

If there is no improvement within 2 weeks after this the case will be referred to the Local Attendance Council. The school and Local Attendance Council will jointly monitor your child's attendance for up to 4 weeks.

Stage 5

If there is no improvement after the joint monitoring period the Local Attendance Council may invite the family to a meeting and may request that an Attendance Order is issued.

Attendance Orders

An Attendance Order is an order in writing requiring you to ensure that your child attends the school named in the Order. The Education Authority will serve a copy of the Attendance Order on you and you must comply with this by ensuring that your child attends regularly.

Once an Attendance Order is made it will continue so long as your child is of school age. When an Attendance Order is in force the education authority may substitute the name of another school, by telling you we plan to do this. If the child moves house the authority may tell you that we plan to change the name of a school your child must attend. You may object to this change within fourteen days of being given notice of the Education Authority's intention.

If you breach an Attendance Order you may face a fine of £1,000 or a term in prison or both. You will be in breach of an Attendance Order if your child fails to attend school without a reasonable excuse.

An attendance order can be revoked provided the request is approved by the Director of Educational Services.

Referrals to the Children's Reporter

If the school feels that it cannot successfully work with you to improve your child's attendance at school, it might involve other services like Social Work or a voluntary agency. Then, if the school feels that there is still not enough cooperation and progress – and it has other worries about your child on top of not attending school – it might decide to make a referral to the Children's Reporter.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/schools/absence.aspx>

Action to deal with persistent late-coming

If your child is late in the morning or after lunch, on **5** occasions across the school week you will receive Attendance Letter 1. If your child's time-keeping does not improve, you will receive Attendance Letter 2 for **10** occasions of late-coming and you will be asked to contact your child's Guidance Teacher to discuss the situation.

Following this, if the situation does not improve and your child is late on **15** occasions or more you will receive Attendance Letter 3 and you will be asked to attend a meeting at the school with your child's House Team to discuss possible supports and reasons for the late-coming.