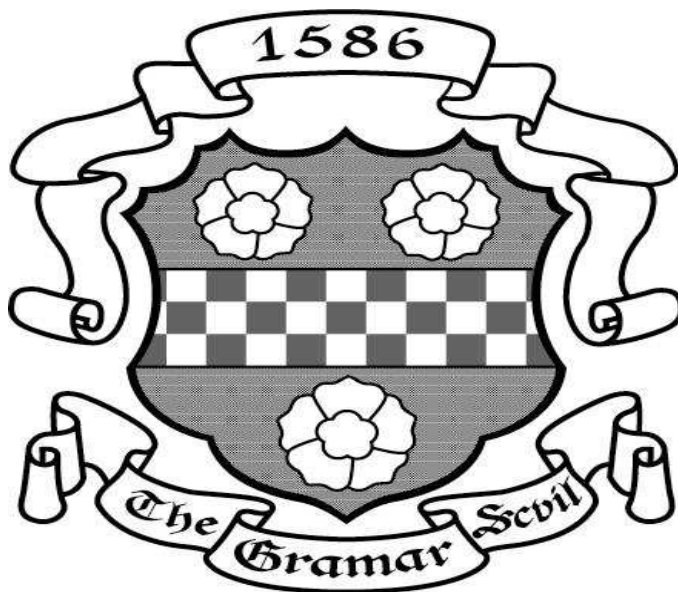


Paisley Grammar School

Promoting Attendance and Managing Absence



**June 2008
Updated January 2010**

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1. Introduction and Aims

Ensuring pupils are included, engaged and involved is fundamental to achievement and attainment in school. Paisley Grammar School works actively with pupils and parents to promote and monitor attendance, and manage absence. This is linked to our overall approach to promoting positive behaviour and providing high quality learning opportunities, and is reflected in the School Aims and Code of Conduct. The particular aim of this policy is to maximise attendance in school.

The procedures outlined in this policy take full account of the Scottish Government's guidance in "Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools" and Renfrewshire Council's Revised Standard Circular 5.

2. Legal Context

Parents of school age children are required by law to provide education for their children. Schools are required to ensure attendance, maintain an accurate register and record pupil absence for each morning and afternoon session. Schools must be able to account for the presence of pupils within the campus at any given time.

3. Recording Attendance

3.1 Overview

In addition to actual attendance within the school premises, the following will also be considered as attendance at school:

- learning outwith the school (college or other off-site learning provider)
- educational visits
- interviews and visits relating to further or higher education or careers events
- debates, sports and cultural activities arranged by, or in conjunction with, the school or authority approved partners
- activities connected to psychological services, learning or behaviour support
- study leave for national examinations
- work experience
- home tuition or outreach teaching

Pupils' attendance will be recorded during each lesson throughout the school day. This information is stored in the pupils' individual record and is monitored by Pupil Support staff and Senior Management.

3.2 Informing the School

If a pupil is not going to be present at school, parents are required to contact the school to inform us of the reason for absence and indicate when the pupil is expected to return.

On return from absence, pupils are expected to provide a written explanation signed by parents. This can be handed in to period 1 teachers, to Pupil Support teachers, or to the school office.

If a pupil is not present at school, and the school has not received a reason for this, we will treat the absence as unauthorised until an explanation is received.

Parents will be contacted by the automated absence alert system to indicate that their child is missing from school.

When parents inform the school of the reason for absence, the pupil's records will be updated accordingly.

3.3 Lesson Registration

Every class teacher has a legal responsibility to accurately record attendance.

Registration is carried out during each period throughout the school day. The procedures for online period-by-period registration are contained in the document 'Period by Period – Teacher Instructions' in the staff handbook.

Principal Teachers should ensure all staff are familiar with these procedures and operate them effectively. They should also assist any supply teachers working in their departments to operate the system.

4. Managing Absence and Supporting Pupils

All absence from school will be recorded as **authorised absence** or **unauthorised absence**.

4.1 Authorised Absence

The school will treat the following absences as **authorised**:

- illness (informed by parent)
- medical and dental appointments
- meetings prior to, and in, court
- attendance at Children's hearing, care review or other meeting with partner agencies (e.g. social work)
- religious observance
- bereavement
- weddings or funerals of those close to the family
- participation in non-school debates, sports, musical or drama activities agreed by the school
- lack of transport, including circumstances due to inclement weather
- exceptional domestic circumstances
- family holidays, agreed by the school, to be taken only in exceptional circumstances
- exclusion

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

The school will treat the following absences as **unauthorised**:

- family holidays (unless there are exceptional circumstances)
- parent condoned absence where the school does not agree there is a satisfactory reason
- truancy
- all other unexplained absence, unless a satisfactory reason is provided
- longer-term exceptional domestic carer circumstances where support has been provided
- during disputes, such as relating to the return of a pupil after exclusion

When the school decides that the reason provided for the absence by the parent is unsatisfactory, the school will record the absence as **unauthorised**. The parent will be informed of this by the DHT Year Head, along with the reasons for doing so.

4.3 Monitoring Attendance

Paisley Grammar School will work closely with pupils, parents and relevant partner agencies to promote good attendance and timekeeping in school and tackle non-attendance.

“The likely impact of non-attendance at school and non-engagement with learning increases the likelihood of young people leaving school and not going on to further education, employment or training.”

(Scottish Government, 2007)

Role of Class Teachers

Class teachers have an important role in monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities:

- accurate recording of attendance
- collecting absence notes during period 1 lessons

Role of Office Staff

Office staff will often be a parent’s first point of contact with the school when a pupil is absent.

Responsibilities:

- recording contact with parents and passing communication to PT Pupil Support
- updating the pupil’s attendance record at the point of contact, unless there is a reason not to do so
- providing attendance and punctuality updates for Pupil Support staff and the Senior Management Team
- operating the automated absence alert system
- assisting with the operation and monitoring of the online registration system

Role of PT Pupil Support

PTs Pupil Support (Guidance) will closely monitor each pupil’s attendance at school, and will liaise with parents and other agencies to support pupils to attend and engage fully in school.

Responsibilities:

- monitor caseload attendance and punctuality daily
- respond to, and update, attendance anomalies daily

- follow up on all instances of unauthorised absence
- alert parents to issues with attendance and punctuality by telephone, by letter or by arranging a meeting
- access support for pupils as required through the Extended Support Framework

Role of Senior Management – DHT Year Heads

Responsibilities:

- monitor year group attendance and punctuality
- liaise with Pupil Support staff to identify and support pupils with attendance issues
- contact and work with parents as required

Role of Senior Management – DHT Pupil Support

Responsibilities:

- monitor Pupil Support
- coordinate the Extended Support Team to support pupils with additional support needs as a result of non-attendance in school
- make referrals to the authority's Prioritisation Group when the school has exhausted all available resources in supporting a pupil to attend school

4.4 Supporting Pupils

Parents are encouraged to contact the school for support as soon as any issues with attendance arise.

Pupil Support staff will advise parents on the available supports to help pupils improve their attendance and punctuality, or to help minimise disruption to learning caused by illness.

5. Impact Assessment

Impact assessments have been carried out on this policy in terms of race, gender and disability equality.

The policy is relevant to the promotion of disability equality. Children with additional support needs will be treated in accordance with the school's duties to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and take account of disabled people's needs.

The policy is relevant to the promotion of race equality. Children of different cultures will be treated in accordance with the school's duties to promote equality of opportunity for people of all racial background.

6. Monitoring

The policy on promoting attendance and managing absence will be subject to monitoring by the Head Teacher and the DHT Pupil Support as per the school's monitoring calendar.

The policy was created in June 2008 and reviewed in 2010.

The policy will be reviewed by the DHT Pupil Support in August 2011.