

## Attendance - A Guide for Parents

January 2026 update

At Princes Risborough School we understand that as parents you want the best for your children, and to support you with this, our commitment is to work collaboratively with you to ensure your child has every opportunity to thrive.

In July 2025 Parliament referred to school non-attendance as a "generation-defining issue", highlighting its national importance. The clear message is that not being in school regularly can profoundly affect your child's development and in turn, their future opportunities.

Put quite simply, we do not want this to happen, and as a school, we are driven to ensure that the "generation-defining issue" of non-attendance is not a barrier that will affect the lives of our children.

We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back on **Monday 5th January at 8:45am** for the start of the Spring term on the Week B timetable.



## Why Being in School Truly Matters – For Development, Attainment, and Well-being:

### Academic Attainment and Future Success:

- **Lower Academic Performance:** the analysis of student exam results and attendance data by the Government clearly illustrates that children who are frequently absent from school consistently achieve lower average attainment.

For instance, data from 2022-23 reveals that only 35.6% of persistently absent pupils (missing more than 10%), and only 11.3% of severely absent pupils (missing more than 50%), achieved grades 9-4 in English and Maths. 67.6% of those who were here more than 90% of the time achieved the grades.

- **The advantage of being present:** Children who attend school over 95% of the time (equating to missing no more than 2 weeks across the year) are twice as likely to achieve a grade 5 in English and Maths compared to those who miss approximately 4 weeks (90% attendance). Helping students in the 90-94.9% attendance bracket to move above 95% can significantly impact their academic achievement.
- **Missing Foundational Learning:** Particularly during Key Stage 3, missing school means missing crucial building blocks of knowledge, especially in subjects such as Science and Maths. If these foundational elements are missed, children can feel 'lost in their learning', which can lead to further absences in Key Stage 4.
- **Opening Doors for the Future:** Ultimately, if children are not in school, they will not have the best opportunity to succeed later in life. Regular school attendance ensures they are continuously building the knowledge, skills, and experiences essential for their next steps, whether in further education, training, or employment.

### Safeguarding and Well-being:

- **A Crucial Protective Factor:** Being "absent from education" is explicitly designated as a "significant safeguarding concern" for children by the Government. This is because a child not in school might not be developing appropriately, or their social, emotional well-being, and safety could be compromised.

Sadly, research also shows a concerning association between regularly missing school and other harms outside the home, including involvement in crime.



## Parents and Carers:

The DfE (August 2025) reminds parents of their legal duty to ensure their child receives an efficient, full-time education, whether through regular school attendance or home education. “Regularly” means attending every school day, except in a few specific circumstances.

Children are of compulsory school age from the term after their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June of the school year they turn 16. Since September 2015, all 16-year-olds are also required to remain in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

While formal sanctions can be applied for non-compliance, as a school we would rather work with you as a family to secure strong and supportive relationships and overcome the barriers faced together.

## Schools:

Our attendance strategy, “Making Belonging Matter” is focused on relationships and creating school environments where children want to be. Our focus is on creating a school environment where every child feels truly valued, supported, and genuinely motivated to learn.



## **Here's how we are planning to support your child and your family:**

**Cultivating a Welcoming Environment:** We are dedicated to ensuring school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive place where all our students genuinely want to be. We believe that strong relationships and a profound sense of belonging are instrumental in achieving this.

**Our “We Missed You” Campaign:** This is a specific campaign for both parents and students, emphasising the importance of relationships and a sense of belonging. It is designed to highlight how much is missed when children are absent and to reinforce that every interaction is an opportunity to support your child, helping them feel appreciated upon their return.

**Educating on the Importance of Attendance:** We will directly teach children why good attendance and punctuality are so important – similar to how we teach good behaviour – through our Tutor Time and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) programmes. These sessions will help students develop a clear understanding of why regular school attendance is crucial for their success and well-being.

**Early Identification and Intervention:** To minimise the impact of absence, our schools follow a rolling 5-week monitoring plan, followed by a 3-week intervention period. This structured approach enables us to quickly identify concerns, work closely with students and families, and address any challenges before they escalate.

**Support for Catch-Up Learning:** We recognise that missing school means missing learning. Subject teachers ensure that lesson materials are available online via Google Classroom for all students. This allows children to catch up independently. Teachers will also offer a warm welcome back, check if resources were utilised and help address any learning gaps.

**Our Ambitious Attendance Goal:** Our aim is for all IAT schools to achieve at least the national average for attendance in their area, and ultimately, to reach 96% attendance or even higher by January 2027. To provide context, the national target of 95% attendance means children should miss no more than 19 school sessions (approximately 9.5 days) in a full school year.

We are deeply committed to building strong, trusting relationships with all our families. By working hand-in-hand, we can ensure every child feels a sense of belonging, excels in their studies, and has the very best foundation for a successful future. We are here to support you, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

**We are here to support you, we hope you feel welcome at school and will not hesitate to get in touch.**



## Working Together to Support Your Child's Success

We know that good attendance has a big impact on your child's learning, confidence, and friendships. We also understand that sometimes, things can get in the way of regular attendance.

### That's why we're here to help.

- Support with Morning Routines**  
Struggling with getting out the door in the mornings? Let us know. We can work with you to build a manageable routine and offer support strategies.
- Help with Anxiety or Worries**  
If your child is feeling anxious about school, our pastoral team is here to listen and help. Sometimes small adjustments can make a big difference.
- Breakfast at school**  
A calm start can set the tone for the day.
- Transport Difficulties?**  
Let us know if getting to school is a challenge—we may be able to help with local support services.
- Regular Check-ins with Families**  
Our attendance team are approachable and non-judgemental. If you're finding things hard, please reach out—we're here to help, not to criticise.



**Rachel Luff**  
RAO - Outreach Officer



**Alpa Boll**  
RAO - Attendance Officer



**Sharon Borrey**  
RAO - Attendance Mentor

## How to notify us of an Absence

Absence notifications should be made before the school day starts at **8.45am** to ensure the relevant staff are made aware and able to offer any support if needed.

Please call the school on **01844 345496**, select **option 1** and leave a voicemail (child's full name, form and reason for absence).



For all appointments please email [studentabsence@prsbucks.com](mailto:studentabsence@prsbucks.com) in the first instance, please do try to avoid school hours where possible, if this is unavoidable we suggest towards the end of the day. Please also send through a copy of the appointment letter, email or text reminder, a screenshot from your phone is acceptable.

### When to Keep Your Child at Home

Please refer to the [NHS guidance](#) which states that children can still attend school if they have mild illnesses like a sore throat or headache. We can support them, in school, throughout the day to help them feel comfortable and stay engaged in their learning.

### Why Attendance Matters

- Children who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve well and feel part of their school community.
- Even missing a day or two each month can add up to weeks of missed learning across the year.
- Being in school helps children build strong routines and friendships that support their wellbeing and development.

If you're worried about attendance or would like support, please contact:

- 01844 345496
- <https://www.princesrisborough.bucks.sch.uk/Attendance/>
- [office@prsbucks.com](mailto:office@prsbucks.com)

### Together, We Can Make Every Day Count

