Attendance policy

Policy version:	1.2
Policy Owner:	Principal – Phoenix Bay
Applies to:	Phoenix Bay School
Linked policies:	• Safeguarding and child protection policy • GDPR policy • SEND policy
Review frequency:	Bi - Annually
AB Adoption Date:	June 2022
Date of recent review:	October 2026
New review date:	October 2028
Approved by:	Ross Banks – Principal  Jill Bainton – Advisory board

Version Control since June 2022

Version	Date of Change/Adopted	Reviewed by	Reason for change
1.0	June 2022	R Banks/Jill Bainton	New document
1.1	October 2024	L Secker	Fines updated accordingly
1.2	October 2026	R banks/ L Secker	Updated attendance support arrangements to include the Student Engagement Lead's role in supporting student transition, re-engagement and barriers to attendance.

Policy Contents:

1	Policy intent
2	Statutory duty of school
3	Principles
4	Appendix 1 – Leave request letter
5	Appendix 2 – High absence letter
6	Appendix 3 - Follow up letter
7	Appendix 4 – Formal notice letter

1.Policy Intent

Phoenix Bay School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all students. We believe that regular attendance is essential to enable students to benefit fully from their education. As a school, we will work with students, parents/carers and relevant professionals to promote regular attendance and identify and address any barriers to attendance as early as possible.

Phoenix Bay School will give a high priority to communicating the importance of regular and punctual attendance to students and parents/carers. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play in supporting attendance and that strong home-school relationships and effective communication are essential when attendance concerns arise.

Where there are barriers affecting a student's attendance, the school will seek to understand the individual circumstances, work in partnership with the student and their parent/carer, and provide appropriate support to improve attendance. Our approach will focus on understanding and removing barriers to attendance before considering formal attendance measures, where appropriate.

If a student is absent from school without a reason having been provided, the school will make appropriate attempts to contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence to establish the reason for the absence. The school will use all available contact numbers and appropriate communication methods where the primary contact cannot be reached.

Where a student is absent and the school is unable to establish their whereabouts or welfare, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures. Where there are immediate or significant safeguarding concerns, the school will contact the appropriate safeguarding professionals and/or relevant local authority services without delay.

Where attendance concerns persist, the school will work with the student, parent/carer and relevant professionals to provide appropriate support and may make a referral to the Local Authority attendance service where required.

Phoenix Bay School will follow the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance and relevant Local Authority attendance procedures. The guidance promotes a support-first approach and sets out the responsibilities of schools, parents/carers and Local Authorities in improving attendance.

2. Statutory Duty of schools

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education and attend school regularly where they are registered at a school.

Schools have a legal responsibility to maintain accurate attendance and admission registers and to record attendance and absence using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes.

Phoenix Bay School operates two registration sessions each school day. The morning register closes at 9:30am and the afternoon register closes at 1:30pm. Attendance and absence will be recorded in accordance with the relevant statutory attendance codes and the school's registration procedures.

Phoenix Bay School will follow the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance, together with the relevant attendance regulations and Local Authority procedures.

The school will make decisions about whether an absence can be authorised in accordance with the statutory attendance guidance. Parents/carers cannot authorise an absence themselves. They should provide the school with the reason for an absence, and the school will determine whether the absence should be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Leave of absence during term time will only be granted where the school considers that there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers should submit a request to the school in advance wherever possible. The school will consider each request individually and will record the decision appropriately.

Where a parent/carer takes a child out of school during term time without the leave of absence having been granted, the absence will normally be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a student reaches the national threshold for consideration of a penalty notice, the school will work in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and the relevant Local Authority procedures. The national threshold is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. A school day consists of two sessions. The sessions do not need to be consecutive and can include different types of unauthorised absence.

Meeting the threshold does not mean that a penalty notice will automatically be issued. The school and Local Authority will consider the individual circumstances and whether support is appropriate, in accordance with the support-first approach set out in the statutory guidance.

Where a penalty notice is issued, the current national framework provides for a fine of **£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days**, rising to **£160 if paid within 28 days**. Where a second penalty notice is issued for the same child within a three-year period, the higher rate of £160 applies without the option of the £80 reduced rate. Further legal action may be considered where appropriate.

Phoenix Bay School will follow the relevant statutory requirements and Local Authority procedures when deleting a student from the Admission Register. Where required, the Local Authority will be notified in accordance with statutory guidance.

Where a student is considered to be missing from education, Phoenix Bay School will follow the Department for Education statutory guidance Children missing education and the procedures of the relevant Local Authority. This may include referral to the Local Authority for investigation and support.

3. Principles

Phoenix Bay School recognises that good attendance is important for students' education, wellbeing, safeguarding and wider development. We will work with students and families to identify and address barriers to attendance and will provide appropriate support wherever possible. The Student Engagement Lead will support students who experience difficulties with attendance, including providing support with transitions into and within school where appropriate.

We will work towards ensuring that all students feel supported, valued and safe in school. We will promote a positive culture of attendance and ensure that students returning after absence are welcomed and supported. Where appropriate, the Student Engagement Lead may support students with their transition back into school following periods of absence or where attendance difficulties are affecting their engagement.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance and will communicate attendance concerns at an early stage.

All staff will be aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and the school's registration procedures. Staff responsible for attendance will receive appropriate training and will remain familiar with current statutory guidance and Local Authority procedures.

Attendance information will be monitored regularly. Where concerns are identified, the school will consider the individual circumstances of the student and family and take appropriate action to support improved attendance. This may include involvement from the Student Engagement Lead where support with transition, engagement or barriers to attending school would be beneficial.

Phoenix Bay School will work with parents/carers, students, the Local Authority and other relevant professionals where appropriate to improve attendance and remove barriers to regular school attendance.

The school will adopt a support-first approach, while recognising that formal attendance interventions may be appropriate where support is not engaged with, has not worked, or where a different legal intervention is more appropriate.

4. Appendix 1 – Leave Request

Student Request for Leave During term time

To: The principal of: Phoenix Bay School Date:……..

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

My child (full name):……

For the period from (date):……

The exceptional circumstances and reason for this request are:

……

……

……

Name of Parent/Carer:……

Signature:……

Please return completed form to the school office. Phoenix Bay will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

Office Use Only

Current Attendance	**%**	**Last Year's Attendance**	**%**
Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this academic year)			

5. Appendix 2 – Letter 1 High Absence

PARENTAL ADDRESS

ADRESS

DATE

Absences from school

This letter is to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

[His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. We are concerned that [his/her] level of attendance may affect [his/her] progress and access to education.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different, and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our students' welfare is of paramount importance to us, and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking at how we can help [him/her] to address any gaps in learning resulting from absence.

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss this and consider whether any further support may be appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

6. Appendix 3 – Follow up Letter

PARENTAL ADDRESS

ADDRESS

DATE

Unauthorised absences from school

This letter is to express my concern at [name's] recent unauthorised [absence/absences] from school.

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] unauthorised sessions ([number] days) on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Please note that unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has **10 or more unauthorised sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within any rolling 10-school-week period**. Any decision to request a penalty notice will be considered in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance*, and Torbay Council's Code of Conduct for penalty notices.

You can find more information about attendance and penalty notices in our school attendance policy. A copy of the policy is available on the school website or from the school office.

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss this and consider whether any further support may be appropriate.

Your sincerely,

Principal.

7. Appendix 4 – Formal Notice

PARENTAL ADDRESSEE

ADDRESS

Unauthorised absence

With reference to our letter dated [date], [name] has now had a total of [number] sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period. These absences occurred on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period.

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance*, and the local authority's Code of Conduct for penalty notices, the school will now consider requesting that a penalty notice is issued by the local authority.

The decision to request a penalty notice will take account of the individual circumstances of the case and whether further attendance support is appropriate.

If a penalty notice is issued, the amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days of the date of issue

£160 per parent, per child, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date of issue

If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority may consider further legal action.

We would like to invite you to a meeting with [appropriate member of staff] so that we can discuss [name's] attendance and identify any barriers or support that may help improve attendance.

Please contact the school office on [number] urgently so we can arrange this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

