

# Attendance Policy



## **Aims**

*'Improving school attendance is everyone's business and, to tackle the challenge we face, we need to work together.'*

Attendance communications toolkit for schools, DfE, January 2024.

We take a 'support first' approach and work with all our families to ensure all children attend school regularly and achieve their full potential.

We value excellent attendance by:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school.
- Ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school regularly.

## **Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

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## Responsibilities

### All teachers will:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority by encouraging all children to attend school by providing high quality teaching together with interesting and engaging lessons.
- Work towards ensuring that children feel supported and valued, sending out a clear message that if a child is absent he/she will be missed.
- Take an attendance register twice a day.
- Complete their weekly attendance record which is displayed prominently.
- Monitor their children's attendance, celebrating good attendance and liaising with parents if concerned about poor attendance and punctuality.
- Know their children's absence rates from the previous school year so that they can build on improvements and target specific children.
- Inform the Attendance Lead/ Family Liaison Officer of any continued concerns relating to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Be responsible for setting work for long –term absentees and those on suspension.
- Provide appropriate support to enable children with long –term absence to make a positive return to school.
- Inform parents of their child's attendance at parents' evenings and on the written report sent home at the end of the year.

### All parents will:

- Be aware of their own child's attendance via the Arbor App.
- Meet their legal obligation by ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time and in a fit condition to learn.
- Contact the school before 8:30am on the first day of their child's absence, and each subsequent day.
- Sign their child in if they arrive late.
- Inform school of any difficulties in relation to their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. If school – time appointments are made, evidence must be provided and the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Give advance notice of absence for religious observance or Year 7 interviews.
- Inform their child's teacher of any issue or problem which may hinder their child's regular attendance at school.
- **Avoid booking family holidays during term time. If this is absolutely unavoidable parents must complete a request for holiday absence form at least three weeks in advance of the period for which leave is to be requested. All holiday taken in term time will be unauthorised unless exceptional circumstances leave no options. Parents will receive a penalty notice if their child has more than 4 days of unauthorised holiday in a 6 week period.**

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## **The Attendance Administrator will:**

- Ensure all registers are accurate, up to date and completed correctly on Arbor.
- Ensure the correct absence codes are recorded, particularly for those children for whom medical evidence has been requested.
- Ensure registers close at 9:00 and 1:30. Any child arriving after the closing of registers will be recorded as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.
- Ensure all absences are accounted for: call parents/carers by 9.30am if a child is absent without notification and refer if necessary if no notification has been provided.
- Send out absence letters as requested by Attendance Lead.
- Remind parents and carers of the NHS [is my child too ill for school](#) guidance.

## **The SEND team will:**

- Ensure attendance is a target for children with SEND if it is an area for improvement.
- Provide welfare support to children and their families and through assessment of their needs, help in engaging a multi-agency response to addressing those needs where required.
- Consider regular non-attendance as a safeguarding matter.

## **The Attendance Lead will:**

- Ensure staff receive weekly attendance statistics via the bulletin.
- Ensure parents receive fortnightly attendance statistics via the newsletter.
- Ensure all children are rewarded for good attendance.
- Collect and analyse attendance levels for individuals, registration groups, year groups and the whole school and address poor attendance at each of these levels.
- Collect and analyse attendance levels of other groups of learners, such as boys and girls, disadvantaged, and SEND and take action to address significant differences.
- Collect and analyse the numbers and proportion of persistent absentees (those children with an absence rate of more than 10%) and implement strategies to effect improvement.
- Promote and reward good attendance through displays and a variety of incentives e.g. weekly trackers, attendance class posters.
- Seek to address patterns of non-attendance, for example at particular times of year or days in the week.
- Monitor attendance levels in non-statutory aged children in Nursery and Reception to identify potential poor attendees.
- Ensure parents and pupils are consulted regularly about how to effect improvements in attendance, through questionnaires.
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Team to identify and support those children whose attendance or punctuality is a source of concern.
- Refer any child with less than 85% attendance to the Attendance & Welfare Officer (AWO).
- Report current attendance facts and issues to governors.
- Complete requests for holiday absence, taking individual exceptional circumstances into account.
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

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- Guide parents towards accessible online resources and information to empower them with valuable insight and guidance for them to make the right decision for their child.

## **The Family Liaison Officer will:**

- Reach out to parents struggling with their child's attendance.
- Liaise with the Attendance Lead regarding individual students with less than 92% attendance.
- Provide welfare support to children and their families and through assessment of their needs, help in engaging a multi-agency response to addressing those needs where required.
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Team to identify and support those children whose attendance or punctuality is a source of concern.

## **The Attendance & Welfare Officer (AWO) will:**

- Liaise with the Attendance Team regarding individual students with less than 85% attendance.
- Update the attendance trackers fortnightly to ensure the Attendance Team are informed of next steps.
- Work with selected pupils and families to raise pupil attendance and timekeeping using a range of interventions, including home visits.
- Work with families to make clear how poor attendance has the potential to prevent pupils from reaching their full potential.
- Initiate Truancy call procedures.
- To prepare and maintain clear, accurate records of actions and responses for individual students, including those records that will support court action where this is necessary, and to ensure the passing on of relevant information for any student attracting a Penalty Notice.
- Act as Issuing Officer in relation to Penalty notices, maintaining clear and detailed records. Abbey Primary School can issue a Penalty Notice or initiate legal proceedings for unauthorised absence, which meet the criteria of the Local Authority Code of Conduct. This applies (i) where attendance falls below 85% of which more than 50% of absences are unauthorised within any 6 month period or (ii) where more than 9 unauthorised absences are recorded in a 6 week period.

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## **Attendance procedures to be followed:**

### **Green: attendance 95% +**

- Attendance celebrated and rewarded.
- Attendance HERO – here, every day, ready, on time.

### **Amber: attendance between 91% and 94%**

- Parents will be contacted by phone / email / face to face.
- **Medical evidence will be requested below 92%.**
- Child may be referred to school nurse /Family Liaison Officer.

### **Red: attendance below 90%**

- Medical evidence will be requested.
- Child may be added to My Concern for safeguarding.
- Children may receive a weekly target tracker.

### **Attendance below 85%**

- Parents will be referred to the Attendance & Welfare Officer (AWO).
- AWO will investigate cause of absence through meetings, calls and/or home visits.
- Careful investigation into child's welfare.
- Penalty Notices may be issued in accordance with the London Borough of Sutton Code of Conduct.

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## Medical evidence request

**Name of child:**.....**Class:** .....

Because your child's attendance has fallen below 92%, you have been asked to provide medical evidence for any future absences.

My child was absent from school from ..... to ..... inclusive.

Please find enclosed /attached medical evidence to support this.

I understand that without this evidence my child's absence will be unauthorised.

**Please be aware that if your child is absent for 9 unauthorised absences in a 6 week period or if 50% of absences are unauthorised within a 6 month period you may receive a penalty notice which is issued by the Local Authority.**

**Signature** ..... **Date:** .....

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## Request for leave of absence during term time

Your child/children should not be taken on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances.

Each request will be considered individually, considering the circumstances of the request, any supporting evidence provided and your child's current attendance record.

Your child's absence will be unauthorised if not considered exceptional. This may lead to your child being referred to the Attendance and Welfare Officer with the possibility of statutory action and a fine.

**Name of child:** ..... **Class:** .....

**First day of absence** ..... **until (date of return to school)** .....

**Number of school days requested:** .....

Please outline below the exceptional circumstance you think warrants this leave of absence and attach appropriate evidence/relevant documents i.e. letter from employer, details of significant event. Thank you.

**I understand that if I take my child out of school I may receive a penalty notice which is issued by the Local Authority. Please see Abbey's Attendance Policy on the website for more information.**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

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To be completed by Mrs Bedfordth.

Thank you for your request for leave of absence during term time

You have requested ..... days absence.

- ☐ I am in agreement this is for exceptional reasons and have authorised this leave.
- ☐ Your request for term time absence has been carefully considered but unfortunately the reasons are not considered exceptional. The absence will be unauthorised.

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Signature ..... Date: .....

Table of attendance to show the impact of absence on overall attendance figures.

Days of absence in one academic year	Maximum pupil attendance for that year
0.5	99.75%
1	99.5%
2	99%
4	98%
5	97.5%
10	95%

Next review January 2025