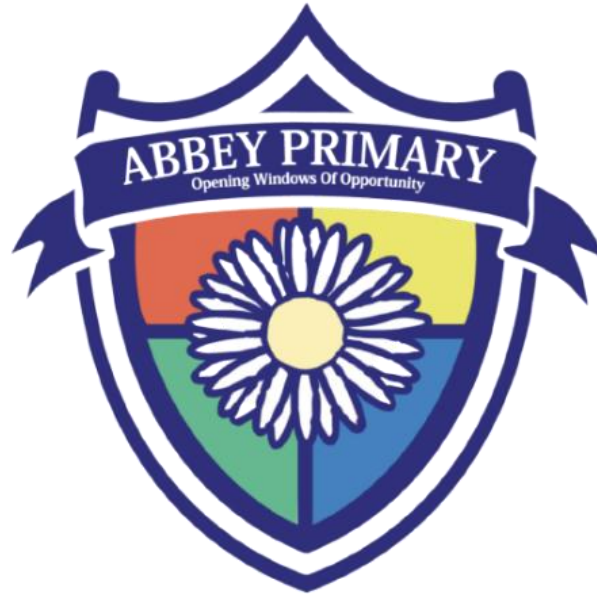


# Attendance Policy



## *Vision '25* *Wellbeing*



*We respect and support each other, valuing our diverse community. We seek to care for and include everyone. We are safe, listened to and empowered to embrace challenges.*

## 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 (2024) 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:

- o Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- o Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- o Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- o The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- o The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- o Sutton Code of Conduct (2024)

It also refers to:

- o School census guidance
- o Keeping Children Safe in Education
- o Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Abbey Primary School shares daily attendance registers with the Department for Education in order to support the early identification of attendance patterns that may signal safeguarding concerns. KCSiE, 2025.

## 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 Senior Attendance Champion/ 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.
- Ensure that their child arrives on time at 8:30 and is collected on time at 3:00 (EYFS & KS1), 3:05 (KS2).
- Contact the school (020 8254 0862) before 8:15am on the first day of their child's absence, and each subsequent day.
- Sign their child in if they arrive after 8.40.
- 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 and referred to the local authority for a fixed penalty notice.**

### **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 morning registers are completed by 8.40am and closed by 9.10am, and afternoon registers are completed by 1.10pm and closed by 1.30pm. Any child arriving after registers close 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.
- Ensure that SEND pupils on long term absence/exclusion are supported on their return.
- Liaise with external and internal agencies to ensure that SEND pupils and parents/carers are given relevant support to improve their attendance, as directed by the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Consider regular non-attendance as a safeguarding matter.

### **The Attendance Lead (Senior Attendance Champion) Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Bedforth ([bbedforth@abbey.sutton.sch.uk](mailto:bbedforth@abbey.sutton.sch.uk)) 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: class of the week with the best attendance, school newsletter, celebration assemblies, stickers, certificates.
- Use data to monitor and improve the attendance of pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most and reward pupils or pupil cohorts with 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, ethnicity, 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 90% 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.
- 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 (FLO) 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 90% 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.

**Procedures**

**Part-time timetables:**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C2, which is an authorised absence.

## Following up on unexplained absence:

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

### 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Absence

- All pupils not seen at registration will be marked as an unexplained (N) absence. The school will call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Continuous Absence

- If no contact with family is made to obtain a reason for absence on the third day of absence, the school will call all contacts listed on Arbor to raise concern and obtain information of pupil whereabouts.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Day of Continuous Absence

- If no contact with the family has been made for 5 consecutive days and no further information has been received, a home visit will be undertaken by the AWO or DSL and a referral to CFCS will be considered.

### 10<sup>th</sup> Day of Continuous Absence

- If the pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive days and no updated provided to school in all the steps above, the child will be referred to 'Children Missing in Education' to Sutton Local Authority.

## Persistent and severe absences:

- Parents will be referred to the Attendance & Welfare Officer (AWO).
- AWO will investigate cause of absence through meetings, calls and/or home visits.
- Barriers to attending school will be identified and reasonable adjustments will be made to remove these barriers where possible. Referrals to appropriate internal and external agencies will be made and their impact regularly reviewed.
- Careful investigation into child's welfare. An Attendance Contract may be offered and put in place for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months and realistic and achievable targets set. If there is no improvement against the targets set after 4 weeks the Attendance Contract can close.
- If the Attendance Contract fails, a 'Notice to Improve' might be sent to give parents. It is a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued.
- Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with, attendance will be enforced through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the child's right to an education. In the first instance, a Penalty Notice will be considered when a child has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks with one of, or a combination of the following codes:
  - (a) code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday).
  - (b) code N (the circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established).
  - (c) code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies), and
  - (d) code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)

## **Penalty Notice:**

- On the first offence, the penalty for each parent is £80 for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.
- Escalation, with any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period being charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.
- A national limit of 2 penalty notices can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, so at the 3<sup>rd</sup> (or subsequent) offence (s), another tool will be considered, such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions.

If a penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, it is likely to lead to prosecution for irregular school attendance (Education Act 1996 Section 444). If convicted, a parent/carer will receive a criminal record and may be liable for a fine of up to £1000 and the Local Authority's costs for bringing the proceedings. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

## **Child Missing Education (CME)**

If a pupil moves out of the area/abroad, the parents must complete a school leavers form available from the school office. This will provide Abbey Primary with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school or a pupil has not attended school for 20 days, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make the appropriate checks.

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**Appendix 1**

**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 10 unauthorised absences in a 10-week period you may receive a penalty notice which is issued by the Local Authority.**

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

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**Appendix 2**

**Request for leave of absence during term time**

Your child should not be taken on leave of absence during term as this disrupts their education. Holiday taken in term time will be unauthorised and referred to the local authority for a fixed penalty notice. **Please see Abbey’s Attendance Policy on the website for more information.**

The trigger for a Penalty Notice with regard to holiday/leave of absence is 5 days/10 sessions or more unauthorised absences (concurrent or separate absences) within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

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

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

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

Please outline below any 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.

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

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To be completed by Mrs Bedforth.

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

You have requested ..... days absence.

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

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

Next review September 2026