Abbey Lane Primary School

Attendance Policy
&
Procedures

Contents

Policy Statement

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Abbey Lane Primary School is committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

The young child, however, is dependant upon the adults in his/her life to get them to school regularly and on time. So the focus in both Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 programmes is to establish good habits and work with parent/carers to improve attendance. In Key Stage 2 we continue to work with parent/carers and start to develop self-responsibility in the children. The school operates within a framework of local schools, including the linked secondary school.

We are, therefore, committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parent/carers.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

The school's attendance target for 2023/24 is 97%

Aims of the Policy

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:
- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil 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
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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

Children Missing from Education

Tim Calcutt is the nominated member of the school staff to liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

Children in Public Care

Sheryl Winslow is the co-ordinator who liaises with the Children and Young People's Directorate Looked After Children Team. Looked After Children (CLA) will be set up as an Attendance Group on SIMS and their individual attendance will be checked each half term.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors
The governing board is responsible for:
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The school's link governor for attendance is Jemma Taylor.

Headteacher
The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

Designated senior leader responsible for attendance – Attendance Champion
The designated senior leader is responsible for:
- Leading attendance across the school

- Ensuring everyone works together to improve attendance and creates a whole school ethos of 'Every School Day Matters'
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Meeting termly with their linked Inclusion and Attendance Specialist to discuss targeted outcomes

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Tim Calcutt

Class Teachers
- Accurately mark registers using appropriate codes and return to the school office promptly following registration
- Report to appropriate staff any issues or problems which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a pupil
- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school

Office Staff
- Receive, update and maintain accurate class registers
- Maintain SIMS attendance database and update on a weekly basis
- Provide reports from SIMS to governors, Headteacher, other school staff and LA officers as requested
- Provide relevant information to the LA officers contacting families regarding attendance and punctuality
- Record notes and update records on daily absences
- Contact parents as appropriate to determine the reasons for pupil absence

Celebrating good attendance

At Abbey Lane Primary School, good attendance is always celebrated. Below are some of the ways in which pupils at Abbey Lane are rewarded for demonstrating good attendance:

- Weekly attendance certificates are given to the classes with the highest attendance in FS/KS1 and KS2
- Weekly Celebration Assemblies celebrate the pupils with 100% attendance from the previous school week.
- Children with 100% attendance are given the chance to be one of six weekly Attendance Champion. Attendance Champions are selected from each year group from Y1-Y6 and are invited to the Headteacher's office for a biscuit and a chat before taking part in delivering the weekly attendance certificates to the classes with the best attendance.

Responding to absence - criteria for referral to the Inclusion and Attendance Service

- Home/school contact has not prompted an improvement in attendance
- Patterns of absence
- Poor overall attendance (90% and below)
- Each half term a review of individual pupil attendance takes place. Any pupil showing an attendance of below 90% for the last term is discussed and, if appropriate, a referral form is completed by the school and passed to the Inclusion and Attendance Service.

- If attendance continues to give cause for concern strategies will be considered and steps taken in an attempt to improve attendance and punctuality. This could include working with members of staff, the Inclusion and Attendance Service or other professionals if deemed appropriate.
- When a pupil has not attended for 10 school days without authorisation the school has a statutory responsibility to inform the Inclusion and Attendance Service.

Local Authority Inclusion & Attendance Specialist will:

- Liaise with the Headteacher, school staff and LA officers to promote good attendance and punctuality within school and the wider community
- Support the Headteacher to produce, review and action the school's attendance plan and policy
- Support the school to develop whole school strategies relating to attendance and inclusion. Offering advice, analysis and monitoring of attendance issues
- Work closely with school staff regarding the pupil concerns list, discuss and agree appropriate courses of action when necessary, including prosecution procedures as appropriate
- Maintain, review and analyse attendance information, statistics and reports
- Discuss targeted children in attendance meetings

The Inclusion & Attendance Specialist for Abbey Lane Primary School is Leah Miayoukou.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before the start of the school day on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils
Pupils are expected to:
- Attend school every day on time

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be open for ten minutes. The register for the second session will be taken directly after your child's lunch hour finishes. This will be at 12.30pm for FS2

and KS1 classes and at 1.30pm for KS2 classes and the registers will be open for ten minutes after the stated times.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may choose to ask for prescription, or proof of appointment for evidence. We will not ask for medical appointment evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where necessary, the parent/carer should bring their child to school before or after their medical appointment. For example, if the appointment ends at mid-day, the child should be brought back to school to reduce any further missed learning. If the medical appointment is at mid-day or after lunch, then parent/carers are expected to bring their child to school for the morning session and collected in the afternoon to attend their appointment.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

- Pupils arriving in the classroom after registers have been returned to the office are deemed to be late (10 minutes after the start of the session)
- The pupil will enter the school via the main entrance after 8.45am
- Parents/carers will be contacted by school if their child is late more than 5 times in one half term
- Late letter 1 will be sent after 5 late marks in one half term
- The school can follow up with the LA concerns around a high number of U codes. These are absent codes and at times identify safeguarding issues and concerns. All attendance data is shared with the governors in the termly Headteacher's report

Following up an unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may do a safe and well check (this involves members of staff, including someone from the safeguarding team, travelling to the child's home to ensure their safety.

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

Authorising Absences

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request

Absence will not be authorised if:
- The parent/carer has not given prior notice of the intended absence
- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- The pupil is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthdays
- The reasons given do not meet the criteria for special or exceptional circumstances as laid out in the 'Exceptional Leave During Time Term Policy'.
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut

Please see the 'Exceptional Leave During Time Term Policy' for further information.

Legal Intervention

Prosecution is used as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate. Where unauthorised absence continues to be a concern after schools have followed the expectations places upon them, they should liaise with their linked Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker to consider next steps.

Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national and local average, and share this with the governing board.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil's attendance is 90% and below and severe absence is where a pupil's attendance is 50% and below. These pupils will be considered as a concern and will be tracked through the school's attendance process. This may trigger appropriate assessment of needs mapping the issues and concerns over Education, Care and Health. School may seek external advice and/or offer interventions to support the pupil back to accessing their full-time education.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

Code	Definition	Scenario
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival half an hour or more after registration has closed	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day