




Attendance Policy

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Abbey Park School
Attendance and Punctuality Policy

1. Introduction

The Trust intends and expects that all decisions, policies and procedures will be underpinned at all times by its vision and values:

Our aim:

To create centres of educational excellence that inspire all pupils to turn their potential into performance

To achieve this our schools will:

Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that allows pupils to develop their talents and ambitions

Deliver the highest quality learning opportunities facilitated by excellent teachers

Inspire our pupils to become confident, motivated and respectful individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society

The Trust will support our schools by:

Maximising the resources and expertise available to individual schools

Providing a platform for the sharing of excellent practice

Challenging and developing staff to turn their potential into performance

1.1 Aims and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Provide our approach and procedures regarding pupil attendance
- Define what we consider to be good attendance
- Outline our expectations of pupil attendance
- Summarise the roles and responsibilities of different people in the school community with regards to behaviour management
- Outline our approach to improving pupil attendance

1.2 Other Linked policies

Behaviour for learning Policy, Equality Policy

2. Policy statement

At Abbey Park School, we expect all pupils to attend regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular school attendance and educational attainment are inextricably linked. We recognise that regular attendance at school is essential for good learning and continual progress and ensures that pupils get the best possible outcomes from their period in compulsory education. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. We expect all of our pupils to aspire to 100%

attendance and appreciate the full support of parents and carers in encouraging this. The minimum level of attendance for this school is 97% attendance. The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

This policy is intended to continue to improve the attendance and punctuality of all pupils at Abbey Park School by:

- a) Ensuring that good attendance and punctuality are priorities for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents and staff
- b) Providing a framework which defines the respective roles and responsibilities of all interested parties and ensures consistency in dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality
- c) Ensuring the maintenance of accurate registers which allows the school to account for the whereabouts of each pupil at any given time
- d) Gathering of reliable data in line with Authority and Government guidelines for the purposes of reporting on individual and whole school attendance

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. Abbey Park School has an effective system of incentives and rewards, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and appropriately challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Parents/Carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and allowing a child to be absent from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence. Parents cannot approve absence. We expect parents/carers to recognise the importance of regular attendance at school and seek their support in:

- Ensuring that their child attends school every day
- Ensuring that their child arrives on time
- Keeping school informed of a pupil's absence (see absence procedures for details)
- Attend all meetings arranged regarding attendance and punctuality
- Attending Progress Review Days

2.1 Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, you must:

1. On the first day of absence, contact the school as soon as possible on 01793 707640. Please leave a clear message before 08.15, that states your child's name plus their tutor group and reason for absence and the date they are expected to return to school.
2. Please ensure you contact the school on each day of absence. This is for safeguarding reasons, so that we know the whereabouts of pupils who are absent.
3. If you are unable to ring or email, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you as soon as possible. You can also reply to the e-mail message sent to you by the school.

If your child is absent, we will:

1. Telephone or e-mail you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. This system is known as 'First Day Calling'.
2. If the school is concerned about your child's attendance a member of the attendance team may visit you.

The above protocols apply to all absences. Should a pupil's attendance fall below 95% then a series of additional actions will be implemented to monitor and address all attendance concerns. Details of these are detailed later in the policy.

2.2 Registration Procedures

a) Morning Registration

Pupils should arrive at school no later than 8.40am ready for the start of registration at 8.45am. Registers taken during registration are the official registration for the morning session. Tutors will mark the register promptly. The accuracy of this mark is vital to all the other parts of the attendance procedures. Pupils who arrive at school after 8.45 am and before 09.05am will be marked late on the register and will be given an after-school detention of 1 hour the following day. Pupils who sign in at reception after 09.05am will be marked absent, and will be required to bring a note of explanation. The absence will be coded as unauthorised and a detention will be issued; this excessive lateness will affect the percentage of attendance and leave the parent/carer at risk of a fine. Once the morning attendance register has been closed, the Pastoral Support Assistant for Attendance will complete the unexplained absence report.

b) Afternoon Registration

Afternoon registration is taken at the beginning of Lesson 4, 1.05pm. Class teachers will mark the register promptly. The accuracy of this mark is vital to all the other parts of the attendance procedures. Pupils who are not in attendance between 1.05pm and 1.20pm will be marked absent.

2.3 Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

a) Authorised Absences

These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Absence can be authorised if:

- A pupil is absent with permission granted by the Principal
- A pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
- A pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in the Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) are met
- There is a family bereavement
- A pupil is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or in connection with an application for a place at an institute of further or higher education, or for a place at another school (during Year 11, this can be recorded as an approved educational activity)
- A pupil is excluded

b) Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be unauthorised where the school does not consider the absence as reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. When attendance falls below 95% all absences will need to be supported by medical evidence. This type of absence can lead to school using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Absence is unauthorised if:

- parents/carers keep children off school unnecessarily
- truancy occurs before or during the school day
- absences have never been properly explained or the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- children arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays are taken in term time which have not been agreed
- a pupil fails to return after the period of time agreed by the school for a family holiday
- a pupil takes a holiday during term time
- medical evidence is not provided. Examples of medical evidence could be medical appointment slips, or medical prescription packaging or hospital appointment letters

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. If a pupil misses school without good reason, the school may issue a Penalty Notice to parents, as one of a number of legal powers. These fines must be paid within 28 days and failure to pay will lead to prosecution.

2.4 Improving Attendance

At Abbey Park School, we use 7 categories to monitor each pupil’s attendance. These are as follows:

Attendance Categories



In the cases where a pupil’s absence becomes a cause for concern and falls below the school target of 96% we will implement a series of actions to ensure that the situation is addressed and rectified in order to ensure an improvement in attendance.

2.5 Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parental support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case

that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by our Pastoral Team. We may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a Key Worker, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer and risk prosecution if attendance fails to reach and maintain 90%.

2.6 Lesson Attendance

A register is taken electronically at the beginning of each lesson using our school information system, ARBOR. The register taken in Tutor time 8.45-8.55 will be the official register for the morning session. The register taken at the beginning of lesson 4 will be the official register for the afternoon session.

2.7 Absence during the School Day

No pupil may leave the school premises during the school day without permission from a Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). All pupils must sign out at Main Reception.

2.8 Illness during the School Day

Should a pupil become unwell during a lesson he/she will be seen to by a member of the First Aid team where a member of staff will make contact with the parent/carer. At Break or Lunch Time, pupils feeling unwell can go directly to the First Aid room to report their condition. Trained staff will then assess the illness and make a decision (through the Head of Year or SLT) about whether parents need to be informed and whether a pupil will be sent home or collected by parents. No pupil should leave school for such arising medical reasons without staff permission.

2.9 Holidays in Term Time

Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school during term time for holidays, and the school does not have to authorise such absences. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Parents who wish to take their children out of school during term time must formally request a holiday from the Principal using the Leave of Absence Request Form, which is available on the school website or obtained from Main Reception.

On the completion of an application form, the Principal will decide, based on the pupil's attendance record, and other relevant information, whether or not to authorise this.

While absence may be granted for a holiday during term time, it is entirely the school's decision and is not a parental right. Other than in exceptional circumstances a family holiday should not be arranged during school time.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. If a parent has received a Penalty Notice for an unauthorised holiday and then repeats this offence, the school will not apply for another Penalty Notice but instead may instruct the Local Authority to prosecute for this offence through the Magistrates' Court.

Government Regulations Guidelines 2006 stipulate that any failure to return to school within 20 days of continuous absence due to holiday will result in your child being removed from roll.

2.10 Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

You could be issued with a penalty notice if your child is absent from school without permission. This can include parents who take their children on holiday during term time without getting authorisation from the school.

The penalty for **unauthorised absence** is £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days. (If you fail to pay a penalty fine, you may be prosecuted)

The penalty for taking your child(ren) on **holiday during term time** without authorisation from the school is £60 per parent, per child, per holiday.

Penalty notices can be issued by:

- Local Education Authority
- The Principal (other members of SLT authorised to do this)

A maximum of 3 penalty notices can be issued per child per year.

2.11 Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss learning and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

a) How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect pupils to be **at school** by **8.40am** at the latest. Any time after **8.45am** will be marked as late (L). Registers are marked at **8.45am** and a pupil will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

Any unexplained or avoidable lateness will be recorded as late to lesson and a C3 issued.

If a pupil has a persistent late record, the parent/carer will be asked to meet with the Pastoral Support Assistant for Attendance or a member of SLT to resolve the problem. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your

child to school on time. We are here to support you and your child if there are difficulties.

b) Detention for lateness – Consequence 3

A pupil will receive a late Detention for after school the following day if they are:

- a. late to school (see above) or
- b. late to any lessons during the day. Pupils that arrive 3 or more minutes late to a lesson will be marked as late (L) on the register and will automatically be placed in an after-school detention. Parents will be notified by e-mail if they have received a detention.

c) Penalty notices for lateness

If lateness to school is frequent and persists, a Penalty Notice may be issued to parent/carer as the pupil would have an unacceptable amount of UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.

2.12 Appointments

Parents should attempt to arrange appointments for their child outside school time whenever possible. When the appointment is local, the pupil will be expected to attend school before and/or after the appointment. Medical evidence should be provided to support appointments taken during the school day.

2.13 Rewarding Attendance

Pupils will be rewarded for good attendance throughout the year through a range of rewards.

In addition, the school will also run reward trips for pupils that meet the eligibility criteria, which will include meeting the academy attendance target of 97% or other clearly defined criteria.

Abbey Park School will also employ the following range of strategies to encourage good attendance:

- a. A positive learning environment where pupils feel valued and welcomed
- b. An appropriate curriculum suited to the needs of all pupil.
- c. Making pupils aware of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality through the work of their form tutor and the pupil tracker
- d. Weekly monitoring of attendance data by the Pastoral Team, to identify patterns of attendance/absence, and to set individual pupil and tutor group targets
- e. Regular reminders to parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance, through an attendance flier, newsletters and parents' evening
- f. Weekly meetings in order to identify how best to support pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties

- g. Letters from the School to parents where their child's attendance falls below 94%
- h. Automated first day e-mail or telephone contact with parents/carers of an absent pupil
- i. Support for pupils who are absent for any extended period of time, through the provision of work at home, and a planned programme of re-integration on return.

2.14 Roles

a) Teachers and Form Tutors

Teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance at the start of each lesson and tutor period. Registers are legal documents and must be taken clearly and accurately, using the correct symbols/codes. No pupil may take a register.

b) Attendance and Welfare Team

The Pastoral Support Assistant for Attendance will check registers every lesson and tutor period to ensure that all teachers and tutors are completing registers correctly and on time. The PSA will also follow up all absences and consider a, penalty fine or legal proceedings, if your pupil fails to attend school.

c) Head of Key Stage/Pastoral Support Assistant

The college leader will work with a pupil when a pupil's attendance falls below 94%. Parents/carers will be notified of this in writing.

d) The Head of Pastoral

The Head of Pastoral will work with a pupil and their family when attendance falls below 90%. Parents/carers will be notified of this in writing and will be invited into a meeting to discuss our concerns.