ABBEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aim, Aspire, Achieve @ Abbeys
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Attendance Policy

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*In the event of Central Government changes on school attendance, this policy will be reviewed earlier.

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1. Introduction

Regular attendance is important
All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time.
education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Abbeys Primary takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its children. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy outlines the aims and expectations of Abbeys Primary School to support children's attendance at school.

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 to school.

2. 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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

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

3.2 The 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

> Authorising fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance team

The attendance team are responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis & Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

> Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance team consist of Mrs Claire Louis-White and Miss Shona Wright, they can be contacted via the school office on 01908375230 and via email office@abbeysprimary.org

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance, twice daily, at morning & afternoon registration via sims, using the correct codes.

3.6 School admin staff

Admin staff will:
> Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

> Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer where appropriate to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 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 8.45am 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 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 after lunch. It will mark whether every pupil is:
> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
We will also record:
> Whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
Pupils can arrive at school from 8:30am they must be in school by 8:45am.
Registers are taken twice daily they are kept open until 9.00am & 1.30pm.

4.2 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. Parents can leave a message on the absence line when the school office is closed.
We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

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.

4.3 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.
Parent/Carers should advise the school office or their child's teacher.
However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:
> After the register has closed pupils will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

> After 9:30am pupils will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Repeated lateness will result in

- a letter informing of the number of late marks.

- An appointment with the attendance team to discuss the punctuality issues

- Warning letter in line with the policy & the LA's guidance which could result in a fine.

4.5 Following up 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 undertake a home visit to ensure the pupil is safe or contact the police if there is sufficient concern.

> 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. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at parent's evenings & with end of term reports

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as
-    Attendance at a relatives funeral
-    A close family bereavement
-    Religious observation

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school,

5.2 Absence before or after a school holiday

Attendance data is regularly monitored for patterns. Letters will be sent out to parents when school notices that the child is regularly absent before or after a school holiday.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60, per child, per parent, within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Classes with the highest attendance every week will receive a trophy to keep in class for a week.
- Children with 100 % attendance at the end of every term will be rewarded with a treat afternoon with the headteacher
- Attendance is mentioned in every school newsletter.
- There are Attendance displays around the school detailing good attendance strategies and expectations.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance across the school is monitored & recorded to ensure there is an accurate picture of attendance and that any areas of concern are identified.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:-

> Monitor attendance and absence data, fortnightly, 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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents 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
- Advise parents/carers of attendance meetings within school & if attendance is below 90% and the child is deemed to be a Persistent Absentee, may require them to attend a meeting with the senior attendance officer from the Local Authority.
- When attendance drops below 95% a letter will be sent to parents informing them of their child's attendance, the child will then be put on a monitoring list. At this stage parents are able to book a meeting with the attendance team to discuss any issues that could be preventing regular attendance. If over a monitoring period of one month the attendance does not improve then a stage 2 letter will be sent out.
- A stage two letter will be followed up with a meeting between parent and school attendance team, parents will be informed that if there is not an improvement then the case will be passed onto Milton Keynes City Council attendance team for their involvement. A pace meeting will be organised this can lead to a fine or as a last resort imprisonment.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the attendance team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Children Missing in Education

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
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 after registration	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