



ASTON-ON-TRENT PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy approved by Governors on 16th September 2024

Minute Number: 84/24

This policy has been impact assessed in the light of all other school policies, including the Disability Equality Scheme.

SIGNED:

PRINT NAME:

C. Jones
Chair of Governors

DATE:

16.09.24

SIGNED:

PRINT NAME:

S. Moore
Headteacher

DATE:

16.09.24

Governor responsible for the
policy-**Anthony Cooper**

Introduction

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

At Aston-on-Trent Primary School, we understand that attendance is crucial for a child's educational and social development. Regular attendance ensures children can engage fully with the curriculum, develop essential literacy and numeracy skills and build strong relationships with peers and staff. We strive to create a welcoming environment where every child is valued, feels motivated and wants to attend school every day. We emphasise the importance of being punctual, and it sets a positive tone for the day, whilst minimising disruption to learning.

Consistent attendance not only enhances academic performance but also lays a strong foundation for future success and instills a sense of responsibility and routine. Fostering a supportive atmosphere and promoting the significance of being on time maximises each child's learning potential and improves their wellbeing.

Although the Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance issues, all teaching and support staff, as well as parents and carers will work together to promote excellent attendance.

Attendance Policy into Practice

1. Attendance registers are marked according to national and local guidelines each morning and afternoon at the start of the session via Integris. If an electronic register cannot be taken, a paper version is taken.
2. Parents are requested to inform the school about any absence on the first morning by either telephone or email. There is the option to leave a voicemail. The absence is then recorded in Integris by office staff.

3. If a parent has failed to contact the school on the first day of absence, the school office will

attempt to call the parent, or other family member if it has not been possible to contact the parent. Should this be unsuccessful, a Parenthub will be sent to parents so that the absence can be explained. This will be done by 9.30am in accordance with our safeguarding procedures.

4. The school business officer and the head teacher monitor absence throughout the year, looking for regular patterns of absence, unauthorised absence and long-term absence. Particular attention is paid to vulnerable groups of children e.g. disadvantaged pupils and those 'looked after'.
5. Where attendance falls below 90% the head teacher will consider the following actions- contact parents by sending a message on Parenthub, write to the parents to invite them to a meeting to discuss attendance, or call the parent to discuss.
6. Where attendance fails to improve over the specified monitoring period, parents/carers may be invited to an attendance meeting with the head teacher, where targets will be set, and support offered. If this fails to improve attendance, then further action may be taken and referral to early help may be made. In the case of unauthorised absence, a request for legal action from the local authority may follow.

Responsibilities

The Head Teacher-

- Has overall responsibility for attendance issues.
- Monitors attendance in accordance with the procedure outlined above.
- Is responsible for offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Is responsible for devising specific strategies to address poor attendance identified through data
- Keeps teachers, parents and governors informed about attendance issues and to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creates intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

Class Teacher-

- Is responsible for completing the register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions to meet legal requirements and comply with fire regulations.
- Children should be entered as present, absent or late. Absences should be marked as authorised or unauthorised (see definitions below). If it is unclear whether an absence should be authorised, the head teacher should make the decision.
- Monitors attendance on a day-to-day basis and informs head teacher of any concerns.

School Office Staff-

- Monitors absence, liaising with Headteacher
- Enters data into Integris
- Follows up unexplained absences on first day
- Records late arrivals after register has closed (after 9.10 a.m.)

Parents/Carers-

- Have a statutory duty to ensure regular attendance and punctuality.
- Inform school on the first day of absence by 8.30am.
- Making sure they and their child understand the importance of school attendance and punctuality and know what the school rules are.
- If taking a holiday in term time, complete a leave of absence request form online form at least two weeks in advance.
- Keep school informed of any health, social or emotional issues that may affect their child's well-being and attendance.

Governors-

- Regularly review and challenge attendance data
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school
- Support school leaders in fulfilling expectations and statutory duties
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- To oversee and monitor the operation and effectiveness of the policy.
- A named governor with responsibility for attendance will be nominated.

Categories of Absence

Authorised Absence-

This is any absence that is approved by the headteacher. These absences will be marked in the attendance register with an authorised absence code.

- Sickness.
- Medical or dental appointments, by necessity made in school time.
- Domestic circumstances that could include death of a close relative, house fire or other traumatic event.
- Any other leave if granted for exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised Absence-

- Absence for which a parent has not provided a reason
- Absence where the reason provided has not been accepted as justifiable or genuine by the Headteacher.
- Truancy-where the child is away from school without permission from an authorised person A parent is not an authorised person and the school may refuse to authorise absences (for example, shopping expeditions, birthday treats etc.).
- Late after the register has closed. This will be ten minutes after the register has closed will be classed as a half-day absence.
- Family holiday in term time – no exceptional circumstances.
- Absence to celebrate a child's birthday or a birthday of a family member

Attendance Strategies

- The importance of good attendance will be discussed at the meeting for new parents.
- Newsletters will be used to remind parents about the school policy and the rules about holidays in term time.
- Prompt investigation of any issues that may be affecting a child's well-being and attendance.

Leave of Absence

The Department for Education expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences, including persistent absence. This is because we know that missing out on lessons leaves children/young people vulnerable to falling behind.

If the headteacher does not authorise the absence it will be recorded as unauthorised on the child's attendance record.

The school will have to make a referral to the local authority if your child has more than 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence.

If this is the case, legal action could be taken and could result in either:

- prosecution under Section 4441/4441A of The Education Act 1996
- a penalty notice which would need to be paid by each parent for each child. If parents fail to pay the parents will be prosecuted.

The Government made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 2006 which come into force on 1st September 2013. These state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In addition, in August 2024, the new National Framework for Attendance came into force.

As a consequence of these changes approval will not be given to requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with beginning or end of term
- Misunderstanding of term dates

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances*** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged. Absences may not be granted retrospectively.

This is Government policy and parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on the child's record and will be

monitored for further action by the School Attendance Service. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.

Examples of **exceptional circumstances as agreed by Aston on Trent Primary School's governors.*

- Accredited Exam – ballet/music (extra-curricular)
- Exceptional opportunity (part in the pantomime, representing a sport)
- Bereavement
- Serious family crisis
- Wedding – close family relative (parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt/uncle)
- Religious Day
- Other exceptional circumstances to be considered on an individual basis

Action Taken for Periods of Unauthorised Absence

Under the new framework, the following applies-

- 1) Absence fines charged to parents will rise from £60 to £80, or £160 if not paid within 21 days
- 2) Only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any second notice will automatically be charged at £160. Once this limit has been reached, other actions like parenting order or prosecution will be considered.
- 3) Schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks- including occasions when a child is marked as late.
- 4) Prosecution and order to attend court because a child hasn't attended school, parents could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Related Policies

Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy- Any attendance issues which may be related to safeguarding and child protection issues will be followed up in accordance with the Child Protection Policy

SEND Policy

Version September 2024