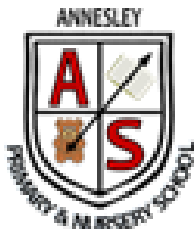




Together as One Collaboration Attendance Policy

Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery School



Policy reviewed by the Governing Body

Date policy adopted: 29.1.2019

Next review date: January 2020

Introduction

At Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery School we expect good attendance and punctuality from all of our pupils, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer.

We believe that regular attendance is extremely important as it promotes successful learning as well as development of the habits needed for the responsibilities of adult life, especially in the workplace.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives we will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support. We will also keep the profile of attendance high across school to emphasise the importance of good attendance for all pupils.

Key Aims

1. To improve the overall attendance of pupils in school.
2. To ensure everyone associated with the school recognises the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
3. To develop a clear framework of roles and responsibilities ensuring all actions to promote good attendance are completed.
4. To promote a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality amongst pupils and families providing support and advice where needed.
5. To ensure safeguarding systems are in place in relation to attendance and punctuality.

Parents' Responsibilities

Under section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability, and any special educational needs that a child might have.

School's Responsibilities

It is the school's responsibility to check and monitor school attendance regularly and effectively, and to inform parents of their child(ren)'s attendance. It is also a responsibility to report to governors on the overall attendance of pupils and that of particular groups of pupils.

School Procedures

Registration

Our school day starts at 8.50am. Registers are marked shortly after this using Scholar Pack. Pupils who are not present for registration will be marked as absent. If they arrive after the register has

been submitted to the office they will be marked as present, but late. Arrival after 9:30 will be marked as a half day's absence, indicated by a 'U' in the register.

Pupil Absence

We ask parents to help the school by notifying us of all absences on the first day by telephone. The school office will record notified absence and the reason given for the absence.

If no notification has been given regarding a child's absence, then on day one, a member of the office team will contact the parent or carer by phone or school text messaging to seek a reason for absence. If contact is not made on day 1, contact will be attempted again on day 2.

On day 3 further phone calls will be made, emergency contacts will be contacted and the school may feel a home visit is required.

When a reason for absence has not been explained, then the following procedures are put in place:

- A letter will be sent to the parents or carers of the child, requesting a reason for the absence with 5 days to respond.
- A second letter will be sent if no reason is still forthcoming.
- If school do not receive an adequate explanation within two weeks the absence will be unauthorised.
- If parents or carers do provide a reason at any point, this will be entered into the register.

Appointments during the School Day

The school encourages parents and carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours. We recognise that this is not always possible with some appointments especially with specialist services such as paediatricians, Speech and Language Therapy, CAMHS etc. For children who have appointments during school hours, parents or carers should provide a record of their appointment. These appointments will be authorised. When children are removed from school for any other reason, this should be agreed by the head teacher or deputy head teacher. Appointments for haircuts or to buy items of clothing etc. are not authorised.

Children who leave school with a parent or carer during the school day for an authorised appointment, must sign out in the office logbook and sign back in upon their return that day.

Holidays during Term Time

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006 came into force on September 1st 2013. The amendments make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If leave is granted, head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

Parents may request a leave of absence using a leave of absence request form which will be considered by the head teacher and school attendance team. If the reason for absence falls into the exceptional circumstances criteria set by the individual school's governing body then the absence will be authorised and a letter sent to the parents. If the absence is to be unauthorised then a letter will be sent to parents stating this.

Exceptional circumstances which **may** be agreed by the governing body are:

- For those parents or carers who work in the Services or Police Force
- For family funerals or a significant bereavement
- For a family wedding day, not a holiday after the wedding
- For religious observance
- For visits back to a child's country of origin depending on the circumstances

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences will be given where no reason for absence is obtained from parents or carers and for the following reasons:

- truancy
- staying at home to look after younger children or sick relatives
- overlying
- shopping trips
- birthdays
- hair appointments
- family holidays that do not meet the exceptional circumstances criteria
- regular illness where no medical evidence is forthcoming
- patterns of non-attendance e.g. every Friday

The Local Authority may pursue cases of poor attendance through the courts. They consider 6 sessions (half days) unauthorised absences within any given 6 week period as persistent absence.

Attendance Monitoring

Every week attendance figures are monitored. Children who fall under 90% attendance will be monitored initially for 2 weeks and their parents or carers notified of this by letter. If the child's attendance does not improve then parents or carers will be contacted a second time. If attendance still does not improve, and the parents and carers have not acted upon school's advice, then the Local Authority Enforcement Officer will be contacted to request a penalty notice. Parents will be informed of this at an attendance panel. The Enforcement Officer will then consider the request including any additional information sent by the school and make a decision. The LA views persistent absenteeism as educational neglect.

Concerns about punctuality can also be dealt with in the same way as above. Where pupils have both poor attendance and punctuality the number of minutes lost will be included in the concern letters.

Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education can be an indication of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children who are missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in the future.

Schools are required to make the Local Authority aware of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly and why children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days.

The schools Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Leads work closely with all school staff to manage risks to pupils. They make sure the appropriate agencies are involved so that pupils receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

Reward Systems

We promote regular attendance and punctuality across school in the following ways:

- Top Dogs award for the class with the best weekly attendance celebrated in assembly
- Additional playtime for classes with 100% weekly attendance
- Certificates for 100% attendance each term
- Attendance displays
- Rewards for the best attending class of the year
- Oscars and certificates for 100% attendance across the year for children and parents
- Certificates and rewards for pupils 99% attendance across the year

Signed: *Karl Simpson*

Chair of Governors

Date: 29.1.2019