



**Active Wellbeing**  
INDEPENDENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Active Wellbeing School

## Attendance Policy

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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

At Active Wellbeing School we recognise that regular attendance by pupils is one of the key factors in raising achievement. We also consider that the prevention of unauthorised absence forms an integral part of our attendance policy to promote good behaviour and discipline.

## AIMS

- To encourage and secure good attendance in line with government targets.
- To reduce the percentage of unauthorised absence
- To reward good attendance.
- To improve the monitoring of attendance at both a school and individual pupil level.

## RATIONALE

In the school's endeavours to improve attendance we consider that there are several important elements:

- The continued development of our computerised attendance system (SIMS) and the use of the data and the reports it can generate
- Raising the profile of attendance across the whole school through Assertive Mentoring
- Encouragement of parental involvement
- Close working relationships both internally with the Family Support Worker (FSW), Learning Mentors (LMs), the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) and the Council's Attendance and Inclusion Team.

## REGISTERS

The registers are taken electronically (Iris Adapt) and show whether the pupil's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has given approval for the pupil to be absent or has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory justification for absence. The Iris Adapt system will show any messages that have been received which relate to an absence.

### Examples of absences that may be treated as authorised

- Illness, medical and dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Interviews for school places
- Dual registration
- Exclusion – a pupil with a fixed term exclusion will remain on roll as will a permanently excluded pupil until the exclusion is confirmed
- Traveller children when travelling if a child has dual registration
- Family bereavement

### Lateness & late collection

The registers will remain open until 8.45am, 15 minutes after the start of the session. Where patterns of lateness begin to emerge the school will seek to involve the welfare officer.

All children are marked as 'L' if they arrive after 8.30am. They are marked as 'U' (unauthorised) if they arrive after registration closes at 8.45am

Parents are reminded that lateness after the register has closed will incur an unauthorised absence mark for the whole morning or afternoon session and therefore persistent lateness could result in their being issued with a fixed penalty notice.

Any child not collected within 10 minutes of the end of the school day brought to the school office where a member of staff will remain with them until an adult arrives. This will be recorded in the late collection book and a letter given to the adult raising this as a concern.

#### **Our computer software capability enables us to:**

- Print out a pupil's attendance record over a period which can be used when discussing attendance with a parent/carer or as part of an insert into a school report
- Set up vulnerable and/or specific groups, siblings etc. to monitor their attendance
- Make first day phone calls or text messages requesting an explanation for an absence
- Identify lists of high attendees for a range of rewards or lists of low attendees for particular attention
- Identify classes in Key Stages 1 & 2 with the least number of late attendance for weekly award
- To identify classes in Key stages 1 & 2 with the highest attendance for weekly trophies
- To provide regular attendance reports to Governors (at least termly)

#### **INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS:**

We believe that the involvement of parents is vital in addressing issues surrounding improving attendance & this is focussed on in our Assertive Mentoring System. We will ensure that parents are made aware of their responsibilities with regard to attendance as per the Government guidelines – 'that in addition to securing regular attendance they also have a responsibility to ensure that the children arrive on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn'.

We will also regularly remind parents of the need to inform the school of the reason for the child's absence as soon as possible.

We consider that in the case of absence it is a reasonable expectation that parents or carers communicate the reasons for absence, preferably **on the first day**, by either:

- Telephoning the school
- Verbal message from **parent or adult**
- Contacting the school via an interpreter

If the child is likely to be absent for longer than a day, they are then required to contact the school again every day of absence.

If none of the above methods were possible we would require a note or verbal message stating reason for absence when the child returns to school.

Absence will be carefully monitored by the School Business Manager and any unexplained absence will be followed up. Reminder letters will be sent to parents who fail to provide a reason for absence after a period of a week. If no response the absence will be **unauthorised**. Additionally, medical evidence may be requested.

In cases where unacceptable reasons are given i.e. parents have condoned the absence for example to take a child shopping, we will seek to discuss these matters with the parents and if serious concerns do arrive we will enlist the support of the LAAO. The absence will be **unauthorised**.

## **Absence**

The school Governing Body follows Government guidelines on making decisions regarding absence and will not authorise an extended Leave of Absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

All parents must complete and submit a **Leave of Absence request** if they are considering taking their child out of school. This form will then be given to the Headteacher to action.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from school for an extended leave of absence, including holidays, during term time and if the school does not grant leave of absence and the child still does not attend then not only will the absence be recorded as unauthorised but they also may be liable to prosecution and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

## **RAISING THE PROFILE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

The Governors believe that good attendance should be rewarded. The school has a number of initiatives to support this. They include:

- Individual termly certificates for 100%
- Termly prize draw for 100%
- Special recognition for 100% school year attendance

Targets will be set for individual pupils with poor attendance patterns or poor punctuality at the appropriate Parent's meetings. Certificates will be awarded for improved attendance, allowing acknowledgement of their efforts and encouraging their development.

## **REMOVAL OF PUPIL'S NAMES FROM THE REGISTER**

The circumstances under which registered pupils can be deleted from the admission register are set out in Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995.

The school will adopt the guidance and procedures in the LA "missing person" policy. This includes:

- Complete a Children Missing from Education (CME) form and send it to the Attendance and Inclusion Team at the LA
- LM to complete the form after 10 sessions (5 days) of absence where the school does not know the child's whereabouts
- Take the child off roll after 20 days (4 weeks)

## **Appendix 1**

## REQUESTS FOR CONFIRMATION OF ATTENDANCE

In recent months schools have reported a significant increase in the number of parents/legal guardians seeking official letters from schools that confirm the admission and/or the attendance of their children at the school. These letters may originate from representatives of:

- HM Revenue & Customs in relation to Child Benefit and/or Child Tax Credits;
- Jobcentreplus in relation to a Habitual Residence Appointment and/or Jobseekers Allowance; and
- A range of overseas agencies seeking to confirm that a particular young person is safe and has been enrolled in a school.

Local authority legal advice has indicated that it would be unreasonable on the part of any school to deny a parent/guardian such 'confirmation of attendance' without just cause and consequently schools are encouraged to comply, but in keeping with the following recommendations:

- The original letter requesting 'confirmation of attendance' should be presented to the school by the parent/legal guardian as named in the correspondence;
- The school should photocopy the original and return it to the parent/legal guardian;
- Inform the parent/legal guardian that a letter 'confirming attendance' will be faxed, posted, or e-mailed, as appropriate, to the named person originally requesting the information; and
- File the photocopy of the original letter, together with the letter confirming attendance.

Discussions with a number of UK agencies has confirmed that this approach is acceptable and in some cases approved as it serves to both minimize the opportunity for fraud, whilst complying with sound child safeguarding practices.

Further advice and/or support in relation to this advice, including home visits, can be sought from Minority Group Support Services on 024 76 689250