

Policy: Attendance and Lateness Policy

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Mission Statement

At Abbey School our aim is to teach to inspire, motivate and nurture the next generation of creative and critical thinkers. We work in partnership with parents and the community to achieve the highest standards. Our main goal is to encourage our children to be resilient, respectful, responsible independent learners, equipped for lifelong learning. Through stimulating, safe learning environments and excellent opportunities to succeed in and out of the classroom, we encourage children's progress and achievements.

Our Core Values

RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, RESILIENCE

These 3 core values underpin the ethos of Abbey School. Our young pupils are encouraged to understand these values and how they develop, initially, at the micro level around themselves, their friendships, their families and our school. Later, our older pupils begin to understand how these self-same values affect our lives on the macro level, with all this means for their lives as they grow into adults and their environment of Devon, the United Kingdom, and also the planet in which we live.

Statutory Policies

We are obliged to conform with several statutory requirements concerning attendance and most can be found in the legislation The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The publication "School attendance parental responsibility measures January 2015" may help parents. In striving to achieve our Abbey School goal of 97% attendance, it is our policy that no child's attendance should fall below 97%.

Rationale

Attendance Matters! We cannot educate children if they are absent from school, whether that is from our remote learning provision as in the Covid-19 pandemic or from our normal schooling. Children's future may depend on good school attendance. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and punctuality by pupils will be recognised appropriately.

Introduction

Abbey School recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil attainment. This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in our establishment of the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality;
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every pupil has access to a full-time education which they are entitled to;
- Ensure that pupils succeed and realise their full potential whilst at school;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Reluctant Attendance

Some children are occasionally reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is not advisable 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 may make things worse.

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Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If there is concern about a child's absence, class teachers will contact the school office immediately.

Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily; once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Abbey School expects parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by *9:00 am and again at 1:30 pm. The morning register closes at 9:15 so pupils arriving after 9:15 but before 9:30 will be marked with an L indicating they are late for school. However, pupils arriving after 9:30 will be registered with a U showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning. The afternoon register is called and closed immediately at 1:30 pm.

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence is one session and is classified by the school as either an AUTHORISED or an UNAUTHORISED absence. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Absence from school

Absence from school without a good reason is an offence.

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 sessions or more to the Education Welfare Service if they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence.

Authorised absence

An authorised absence is when time is taken away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes, which might include:

- Illness;
- medical or dental appointments - these should be the length of the appointment only with the child attending school before and after the appointment;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- child travelling for the purposes of parents employment;
- family bereavement;
- involvement in a public performance;
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis);

Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence is one that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- family holidays (because it is quieter/cheaper to go in term time)
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a registration attendance mark

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc.

Procedures in the event of absence

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Parents are required to inform school on the morning of the first day of absence **and on each day thereafter**. Emails, voicemails and notification through the Studybugs App are all acceptable forms of informing the school of absence
- The school operates a first day contact system which means that should we not have been

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informed of a child's absence before 9.30am, we will telephone parents to identify why their child is not in school. This is part of the school's commitment to safeguarding the safety and welfare of children.

- Unexplained absences are followed up with an email from the school office. No reply to this results in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- When pupils arrive late, they are required to report to the main office where they will be signed in
- In appropriate circumstances, entering into Parenting Contracts and issuing Penalty Notices will be considered.

Lateness:

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

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 9.00am and we expect your child to be in class by 9:15 at the latest. Our doors will open from 8.50 onwards. Registers are marked by 9.15 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.15 a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the learning mentor and/or Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. 5 lates in any school year will trigger a meeting with the class teacher. If the situation does not improve and a child has 10 lates a meeting will be arranged with the Headmistress who may seek the advice of the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and warnings regarding potential fines will be discussed.

Holidays During Term Time

In April 2013 the government issued amendments to 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Therefore, our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstance are just that and will be agreed only rarely.

Parents should apply by letter/email if they are considering a holiday in term time at least 2 weeks before the holiday is planned. The school will consider the request and let parents know in writing whether it has been authorised, or more likely, you will be informed that it is unauthorised absence.

Punctuality

In addressing punctuality at Abbey School we:

- have clear procedures - registers close at 9.15 am and 1.30 pm;
- publicise this policy in School and communicate it to parents/carers;
- balance any sanctions with positive encouragement;
- praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality;
- ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons;
- follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. An annual target is set and children and staff are kept informed on attendance figures.

The Headteacher & Secretary, analyses attendance data to identify trends for individual pupils' classes and year groups enabling the school to target efforts. Wherever possible action should be taken by the school to improve a pupil's attendance, investigate and address any underlying cause of problems before considering whether to make a referral to the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority.

Low Attendance

Attendance Matters! If a parent or carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school, they could be found guilty of a criminal offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, unless the absence has been authorised by the school. When an individual pupils' attendance level falls below 90% (dependent on circumstance) in any term without good reason, we will usually take the following steps to try to improve it:

Step 1:

A letter will be sent to parents/carers to bring their attention to their child's low attendance and remind them of how important it is that their child is in school. Parents will be given an opportunity to request a meeting with the Pastoral Team.

Step 2:

If attendance does not improve within half a term of receiving this letter, the pastoral team will be notified. Parents will be sent a further letter, requesting them to make a meeting with the pastoral team so that we can work together to improve their child's attendance. We will also draw their attention to our obligation to report low attendance externally if it does not improve.

During this meeting, a written agreement will be made between school and family. This will include:

- A statement agreed by all parties to address any issues which in turn will support the attendance process for the child and thereby assist the parent in complying with the contract.
- A timeframe with which to improve the attendance.

This is a voluntary agreement, but refusal will be noted in the legal arena should the case progress further.

Step 3:

If attendance does not improve, a final letter will be sent to encourage cooperation. We will also draw attention to our obligation to report low attendance externally.

Step 4:

Attendance below 90% without good reason a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Monitoring

The Headteacher is responsible for the operational management of the policy. Class teachers, supported by the Secretary, are responsible for recording attendance for their class. The Secretary, supported by the Headteacher, is responsible for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is a longer-term, general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will arrange for the parent/carers to be contacted.

Attendance Targets

School staff contact parents on any day a registered pupil of compulsory school age is absent without explanation ('first day contact'). By contacting the parent, the school also ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent where necessary to establish their child is safe. Parents have access to their child's latest attendance on each half yearly report.

The school sets attendance targets each year. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Our school attendance target is 97%

During 2016-17-18-19-20 and 21 we achieved our attendance targets of 97%

The attendance target includes unauthorised absences and holidays taken during term time.

The school takes an active part in initiatives such as local spotlight weeks, working closely with Education Welfare Officers, Parent Support Workers, the local Police and others.

Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any half term will receive a certificate, awarded in the next celebration assembly; achievement and progress certificates will be awarded also for children whose attendance improves significantly from one term to the next.

Responsible Persons

Office: Secretary Ms E Schofield; Headteacher: Miss F Greinig; Principal: Mrs S J Greinig

Summary

Abbey School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents. Each child's personal attendance record is published on each half yearly school report.

Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to maximise attendance.

***Attendance and registration have altered during the Covid -19 pandemic. For the details, please see our latest Arrival and Departure Policy and Procedure.**

School Illness Guidelines

Please check that your child knows how to wash his/her hands thoroughly to reduce the risk of cross-infection. School attendance could be improved for all if children and families wash and dry their hands well five or more times a day.

The above information has been provided by the Health Protection Agency

See list below on how to treat illnesses:

When can your child return to school / nursery

Chickenpox	Stay off school until blisters have all crusted over or skin has healed, usually 5-7 days from onset of the rash.
Conjunctivitis/Ringworm	Seek medical advice.
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	If child is affected, they need to self-isolate for 10 days unless negative test result. If residing family member of child is the one unwell, child needs to self-isolate for 14 days.
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting	Stay off school for 48 hours after last bout.
German measles/rubella*	Return to school 6 days after rash appears but *school to be advised immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.
Head Lice	Please refer to Head Lice Policy.
Impetigo	Stay off school until the sores have crusted over and healed or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment.
Measles	Stay off school for 4 days after rash appears.
Mumps	Stay off school for 5 days after swelling appears.

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Scabies	Your child can return to school once they have been given their first treatment although itchiness may continue for 3-4 weeks. All members of the household and those in close contact should receive treatment.
Scarlet Fever	Can return to school 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment.
Slapped cheek*	No need to stay off school (infectious before rash), however, *school to be advised immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.
Shingles*	Stay off school only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered. *School to be advised immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.
Whooping cough	Stay off school until 5 days of antibiotics have been given, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment has been prescribed.

Absence Codes

The following codes are used in the registers when marking a child's attendance or absence:

/	Present
L	Late – arrived before registration closed
I	Ill
M	Medical Appointment
U	Late – arrived after registration closed
O	Other unauthorised absence
N	Reason not known
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)
E	Excluded
R	Religious Observance
C	Other authorised absence
B	Education off-site
P	Approved performance
V	Educational visit or trip
X	Self-isolating (COVID-19)
#	School Closed

A salutary note on School Absence

Attendance Matters! What absence may mean.

Attendance during one school year	Equals days absent	Which is roughly these weeks absent	Which is this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons