

# Abingdon Primary School



This school is an academy within The Legacy Learning Trust.



## Attendance Policy

Status & review	Term	Year
Last review date/Policy adopted	Autumn	2024
Next review	Autumn	2025
Lead	Mr A Cooper	

## **Attendance Policy (2024)**

At Abingdon Primary School we believe that excellent attendance and punctuality is the key to ensuring that our pupils have the best life chances and opportunities. We strongly believe that having access to and receiving a good education is the best way we can ensure that all children achieve the best possible outcomes, empowering them to make the best and most positive choices about their future lives. Parents have a vital role to play and at Abingdon Primary School, there is a strong emphasis on maintaining home-school links and good communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

### **Senior Leader responsible for attendance:**

Mr Cooper (Head Teacher)

Miss Lambert (Assistant Head Teacher)

### **Team Around the Child (TAC) – who support with attendance**

Miss Colclough      First Day Response Admin

Miss Barry            Attendance Admin

Mrs Bashir            Parent Support Advisor

Mr Summerton        Wellbeing Lead

### **Attendance link Governor:**

Mrs J. Wallace

To report an absence, request special leave, discuss any issues related to attendance or to request support, parents/carers should contact the school via phone.

Telephone: 01642 210567

### **Attendance and the law**

All pupils of statutory school age who are registered at a school must attend regularly, in line with the relevant legislation (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013). From September 2024, it will be mandatory for schools to share attendance daily with the DFE.

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attendance encourages pupils to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing life skills.
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying and do not miss out on essential learning and social events taking place. Good attendance is linked to greater success in terms of the personal development of pupils.
  - Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training
  - Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.

Whilst parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child/children attend school regularly and on time. It is the responsibility of schools, parents/carers and pupils to work in partnership to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate education suitable to their needs. As a school we will work with families to identify reasons for poor attendance and support them to resolve difficulties.

Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is part of all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying and Behaviour.

**We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- Be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure their child(ren) regularly attend school.
- Ensure that their child arrives at the school punctually at the start of the day.
- Ensure that they contact the school each day that their child is absent before 08.45am and explain the reason for the absence.
- Apply to the Headteacher for a period of absence in advance where there are exceptional circumstances.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- Provide school with two emergency contacts.
- Work with school staff to address any attendance or punctuality concerns which may arise.
- Not ignore, agree with or condone their child's non-attendance.
- Support school attendance by not taking family holidays during term-time.
- Where possible, aim to make medical/dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will aim to ensure that pupils attend school prior to/after each appointment to minimise the amount school missed. Parents/carers must provide school with evidence in the form of a text/card from the appointment for absence to be authorised.
- Support the school attendance and punctuality policy.

**Abingdon Primary School will:**

- Meet and greet pupils on entry to school.
- Provide a safe, nurturing learning environment where pupils want to be every day to grow, thrive and flourish.
- Provide a welcoming and supportive atmosphere which enhances pupil progress and development through inspirational and innovative teaching and learning.
- Promote and recognise outstanding and good attendance and punctuality through a strategic whole school initiative.
- Promote and recognise improvements in attendance and punctuality through a strategic whole school initiative.
- Ensure respectful relationships filled with openness, honesty and kindness where we respond to any child's or parent's concerns that may impact the pupil's wellbeing, attendance, or punctuality.



- Maintain regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality; ensuring registers are taken for every morning and afternoon session within the first 10 minutes of arrival and missing pupils are reported for safeguarding reasons.
- As a safeguarding priority, ensure that parents/carers are contacted when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Monitor and report whole school, cohorts, individual pupils, vulnerable group attendance to inform planning and to ensure relevant support can be put in place.
- Follow up unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence.
- In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, we will discuss requirements needed on an individual pupil basis.
- Where a child's attendance is a cause for concern, meet with parents to set targets for improvement and put attendance contracts in place with appropriate support.
- Request medical evidence for absence due to illness.
- Work with the Local Authority and other external partners to support pupils and their families with regards to attendance and punctuality.
- Where appropriate, make referral to the Local Authority Schools Attendance Service.
- Request Penalty Notices to be issued for unauthorised leave in term time.
- Request Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence where in-school support and support from the school Attendance Lead has failed.
- Make a copy of the policy available on the school website.
- Will communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance through school reports, personalised letters (where concerns arise) and Class Dojo.

### **School Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education**

Children and young people may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of Abingdon Primary School, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for each child encompasses: - Attendance, Behaviour, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying.

Children who are missing education are at greater risk than those who are seen regularly in school. Examples of these risks include:

- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Radicalisation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Modern Day Slavery Domestic
- Violence
- Honour Based Violence
- Neglect

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. That is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

## **Continuous Absence and Safeguarding**

In cases where a child has been absent for two consecutive days and we have been unable to contact with the parent/carer, a senior leader or member of our TAC team may make a home visit.

## **Child Missing in Education**

If your child has been missing for 10 consecutive days school will submit a Child Missing in Education (CME) form to the Local Authority. This may result in a joint decision between the Local Authority and school with the child being removed from roll at Abingdon Primary School.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

## **The Governing Body will:**

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Have a named governor linked to attendance

## **Safeguarding and the Law**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and pupils under the age of 18.

## **Authorised Absence is defined as:**

Absence in term time where permission has been given by the school. Examples of authorised absences include:

- Genuine illness
- Medical or dental appointment (routine appointments should be arranged out of school time)
- Bereavement – (Headteacher's discretion)
- Religious observance (The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong)
- Approved leave in term time only where there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the Head Teacher.

The above list is not exhaustive and each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.



### **Unauthorised absence is defined as:**

Absence in term time where permission has not been given by the school. This means that parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school during term time.

Examples of unauthorised absences include:

- Any absence that the school has not been informed of by letter or by telephone
- Unexplained absence. Any child whose absence is on-going and remains unexplained for an extended period (10 days) will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education (CME)

Other examples of where absence will not be authorised:

- Staying at home to care for younger children or sick relatives
- Birthdays
- Family celebrations
- Parents'/family Weddings
- Transport issues or car broken down
- Holidays in term time (following the Department for Education's Guidelines)
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment.
- Visiting sick relatives
- Protests

The above list is not exhaustive and each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

### **Punctuality and Registers**

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

At Abingdon Primary School:

- School doors open for children in Years 1- 6 at 8:35am with gates closing at 8:45am. Gates open for reception at 8:55am and close at 9:05am. All registers remain open until 9:15am. Children in Years 1-6 are late after 8:45am and must enter through the main reception whereby they receive a late mark. If children arrive after 9:15am, they receive a 'U' code – arrived in school after the register has closed.

All lateness will be challenged.

- Afternoon registration takes place immediately after the lunch break, between 13:00pm and 13:15pm.

### **Pupils Leaving During the School Day**

Whenever possible, parents/carers should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time; only urgent appointments should be attended during the school day. Parents are requested to confirm by phone, letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.

Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school at the school office.

### **Leave of Absence**

Abingdon Primary School term times and holiday dates are published a year in advance and are published on the school website. School training days are published as soon as the

school have agreed these but may be subject to change. The school will ensure that they communicate any changes to parents/carers through either text, email, newsletter or on the website.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for pupils to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Parents/carers should make any request well in advance and in writing (a form is available from the school office). Requests for absence for reasons such as compassionate leave and sporting or musical competitions should be made in the same way.

All requests are considered individually, considering the circumstances of the request.

Other factors will also be considered, such as:

- The time of year the pupil will be absent.
- The attendance record of the pupil.
- the number of previous requests for leave of absence.
- the pupil's ability to catch up.
- the pupil's current year group.

Parents will be notified of the decision in writing.

Where a parental request has been refused, and parents continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We reserve the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

#### **Understanding barriers to attendance**

Where attendance is falling to a level causing concern parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss and address any potential in school barriers. Where barriers are out of our control, we will meet with pupils and parents/carers to enable us to understand the barriers and agree actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support.

Where absence intensifies, so will the support. We will work with pupils, parents/carers, the local authority, and all other relevant partners. Where appropriate, formal meetings will take place involving parents/carers, the pupil and the senior leader responsible for attendance.

These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but, importantly, will also provide an opportunity to continue to listen to, understand and empathise with the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available.

It is important to note that whilst our policy will be applied fairly and consistently, we will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families with regards to specific barriers to attendance. Measures described in paragraph 40 of 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' will be implemented as and when the need arises. Where appropriate we will liaise with external partners such as the Local Authority and/or medical services to ensure that all pupils are able to access education.

In very exceptional cases, and where it is in the pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. These will be discussed and agreed with the designated senior leader and will be regularly reviewed.

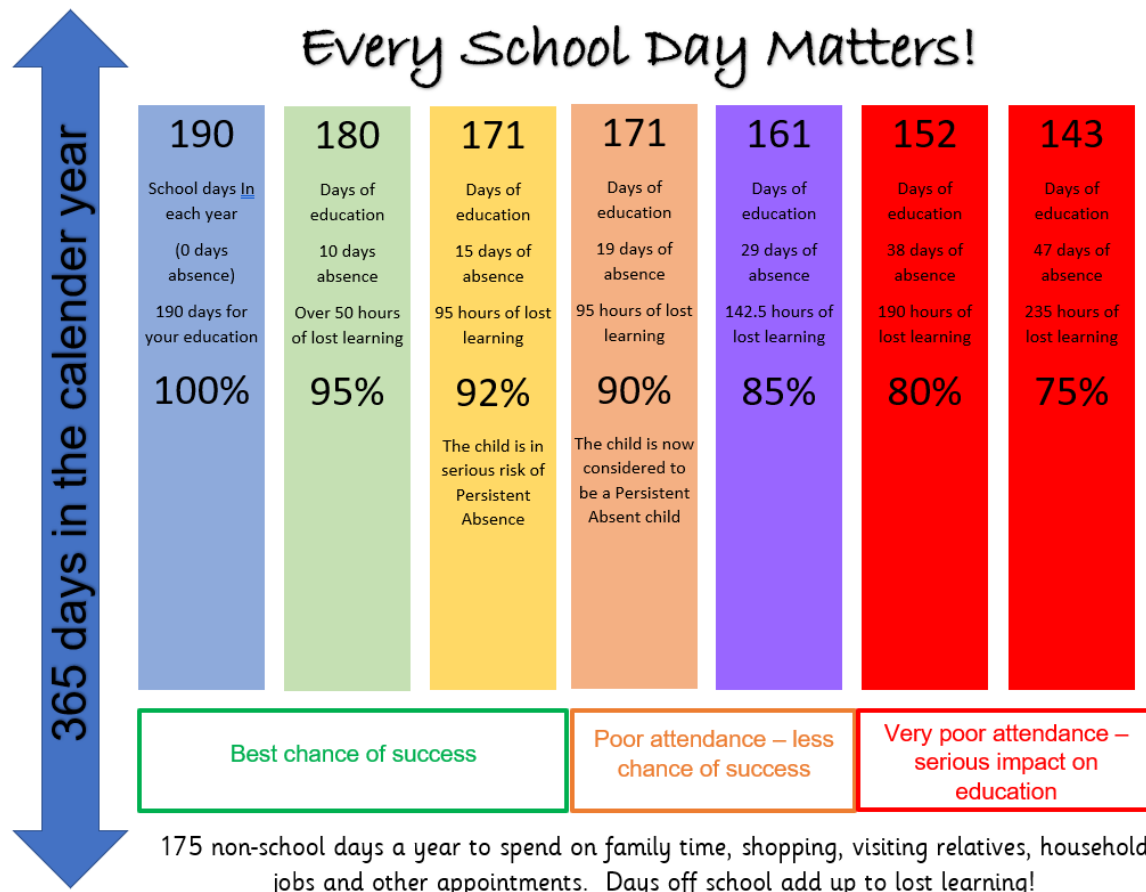
#### **Long Term Sickness**

Children who are expected to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days of school due to illness will have their details passed on to the Local authority.

### Persistent Absence (PA) Indicator

The Department for Education regards attendance of 90% or below as persistent absenteeism.

The table below shows an indication of approximately how many days a pupil needs to miss per half term to meet the threshold of persistent absenteeism.



Average attendance of 85-90% over five school years equates to pupils missing half a school year of education.

Average attendance of 80% over five school years equates to pupils missing a whole school year.

The Department for Education regards attendance of 50% or below as severe absenteeism.



## Attendance Procedures Stage 1 – Monitor

This section describes the role of school in relation to improving attendance.

- The class teacher has responsibility for maintaining an accurate register and collecting notes explaining absence. Teachers promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance in school through their strong, positive relationships with pupils and families.
- All pupils that fall in the range between 91-96% are regularly monitored by the Attendance Team.
- Early intervention might include a phone call, letter or meeting with parents/carers.
- Further support may be needed by the TAC Team to work with parents and pupils to better understand underlying factors for poor attendance and offer appropriate support.

## Stage 2 – Intervene

- Where early intervention has demonstrated a lack of sustained improvement, school will intensify monitoring and levels of support.
- Parents/carers will be offered support via Early Help, Barnardo's or School Nursing service etc.
- Parents/carers will be asked to visit the school to discuss attendance and strategies to improve, with the TAC Team in order to formalise support.
- Parents may be offered a parenting contract which is a formal written agreement between the school and parents

## Stage 3 – Enforce

Parents/carers and pupils are supported by the school's TAC Team and by the Local Authority to overcome issues that prevent regular school attendance through a wide range of intervention strategies. Where this intervention fails, a penalty notice can be issued for unauthorised absence and if a parent/carer fails to ensure improved attendance.

- Where attendance falls below 90% - a meeting will be arranged with the Senior Leader responsible for attendance to discuss the pupil with the School Attendance Team and/or Head Teacher.
- If appropriate, the parent will be contacted by the school's Attendance Lead and maybe invited into school where an Initial Assessment of Need is completed.
- If required a referral will be made to statutory services including social care.
- An Attendance Support Plan will be put in place and the pupil's attendance will continue to be monitored for four weeks. The Attendance Lead to complete home visits as necessary for the duration of the plan.
- Should the pupil's attendance continue to cause concern, then the Education Welfare Officer will consider further action in line with Local Authority Attendance procedures (details of which can be found at <https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/schools-andeducation/school-attendance>). This may include inviting parents into school to an Attendance Case Conference. The case will be heard then reviewed again in four weeks, looking for a substantial and sustained improvement.



- The Attendance Lead may refer the matter to the Local Authority and issue a Fixed Penalty Warning Letter to parents/carers.
- If a pupil's attendance continues to cause concern and they have 10 unauthorised absences in seven school weeks, in-line with local authority attendance procedures, the Attendance Lead will complete the Unauthorised Absence Referral Form. The case will then be referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service who on receipt will action the referral within 10 school days.

### **Penalty Notices**

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parent/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or other agencies including the local authority Education Welfare Service. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents/carers will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

This policy is in line with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service information on Penalty Notices and falls under Sections 444a and 444b of the Education Act 1996. The Education (Penalty Notices: England) Regulations 2007 set the framework for the operation of the Penalty Notice Scheme. Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued are:

#### **Irregular school attendance**

- 10 unauthorised sessions (AM and or PM sessions) over a seven-week rolling period (this is also inclusive of lateness).
- Parentally condoned absences which are not authorised by school.
- Unauthorised holidays in term time.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Being in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion.

#### **Payment of Penalty Notices**

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £160 when paid within 28 days. The amount payable is per parent, per child.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the Local Authority is then obliged to refer the case for prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, for failing to ensure regular school attendance or withdraw the penalty notice.

#### **Changing Schools**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Abingdon Primary School as soon as possible and contact Local Authority admissions department. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- A new home address if appropriate.
- CTF file requested from the new school.
- Confirmation call to the new school.

The pupil's records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority by

the school's Attendance Lead for follow up through the Children Missing in Education procedure.

### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

Staff will take every opportunity to encourage and praise regular attendance and punctuality. Regular written communication with home will aim to remind parents of the need to ensure children attain maximum attendance.

The importance and benefits of regular attendance and punctuality are actively promoted to parents and children at Abingdon Primary School through:

- Our school vision – Believe in Achieving
- Our school ARCH values
- Weekly achievement assemblies – with attendance shared on screen
- Parent consultations– attendance and punctuality are discussed
- Weekly attendance data shown on the screen in the school entrance and shared on social media platforms
- Attendance and punctuality information included in pupil reports
- Communication with parents/carers e.g. personalised letters, newsletters and school website

### **Rewards and inclusive incentives:**

- Attendance rewards for the class in each year group with the highest attendance celebrated weekly
- Attendance rewards given to pupils with improving attendance each half term
- Punctuality prizes for children that are present and on time for school
- Praise postcards sent home to celebrate good or sustained improved attendance

### **This Attendance Policy has due regard to the related statutory legislation including:**

- Parental Responsibility Measures
- Children Missing Education
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School
- Exclusions Policy Alternative Provision
- Safeguarding (KCSiE)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- SEND Code of Practice
- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following school policies:**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- SEND
- Suspensions and Exclusions

## DFE Attendance Codes used in Abingdon Primary School registers

Code	Description
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

