



Attendance Policy

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

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Revision History:

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes:
V.01	28-10-2019	GA	Initial Policy
V.02	10-09-2020	GA	Admissions protocols reviewed
V.03	01-09-2021	GA	Amendments made to Persistent Absentee section

Attendance Policy

Attendance

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Abbey Mead Primary Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time; therefore, having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. It is the attendance officer's responsibility to work with staff, governors, pupils and their families to monitor, consolidate and improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Aims and Objectives

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and Local Academy Councilors (Governors) at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. This attendance policy ensures that all staff and Local Academy Councilors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy, we aim:

- To reach a minimum target set by the school and Education Welfare Service, of at least 96.2% average attendance over the school year
- To help each pupil to achieve 'above average' attendance of 98%
- To reduce the number of 'persistent absentees' and to work with identified families to address issues preventing good attendance
- To provide children with a lifelong, positive attitude to school which begins with good attendance
- To establish good habits ready for the workplace
- To closely monitor the attendance of every child and challenge parents who do not ensure their child attends regularly
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence
- To show understanding of our community's culture and the significance of religious observance to our pupils

Principles

We believe that attendance has a huge impact on the attitudes and attainment of children. When children miss time at school, they miss sections of learning; particularly if there is an introduction to a subject or a new topic. Missing time can be very disruptive for the child, for the teacher and the rest of the class.

We emphasise the importance of good attendance as soon as children start school. If a child who has a place in Nursery has not attended for 5 consecutive sessions, without reasonable explanation, they will receive a letter to explain that their attendance is a concern.

If a child has more than 20 continuous days of absence and parents are not able to provide medical evidence or a reasonable justification, the parent risks their child being removed from roll in line with council procedures and Safeguarding Legislation. Parents will then need to reapply through the admissions process if they wish their child to return to Abbey Mead Primary Academy.

Monitoring

Teachers will take responsibility for the day-to-day monitoring of attendance in their class. The attendance officer (Humairaa Patel) will make a first response call home to request a reason for absence for any child who is not marked as present on the register. We will provide training for new staff completing registers so that they are completed accurately and consistently to assist with the monitoring process. It is the responsibility of our Parent Link Worker (Mina Savani) to examine attendance data regularly and report findings to the Principal and Local Academy Council. Poor attendance (below 95%) will be followed up in person, by telephone or by letter after a discussion with the child's class teacher to find out if there are reasons for the absences. We will also make clear that we expect an explanation for absences on each occasion and for every effort to be made when getting children to school. We will always endeavour to help parents/carers who are having difficulties in getting children to school and have a 'Removing Barriers to Learning' Team to support with this.

Any absences that continue to cause concern and that cannot be explained by the parents/carers will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS). Cases are also referred to the EWS where attendance is authorised by parents/carers but is still a cause for concern; for example, due to regular absences, when a child is regularly ill on a Monday or a Friday, or when a phone call is made to say a child is ill but they are seen out. The Local Academy Council will receive a report on attendance at their termly meetings and will be made aware of any initiative that is going on to raise the profile of good attendance.

Attendance Bands

At Abbey Mead Primary Academy, we strive for all children to achieve their full academic potential and aim for 100% attendance. Our clarification of the different attendance bands are as follows:

100%-Outstanding

98.01%-99.9% (with no unauthorised absence) – Excellent

96.01%-98% (with no unauthorised absence) – Good

90%-96%- concern/requires improvement (acknowledge where attendance is improving)

90% and below - persistent absentee

Keeping Children Safe in Education

At Abbey Mead Primary Academy, it is our legal responsibility to ensure that every child is safe and receives a suitable education. If we have not received a reasonable explanation for a child's absence; have reasonable grounds to doubt an explanation received; or have been unable to contact a parent or carer to explain an absence, a 'safe and well' check will be carried out at the child's home address. This will be undertaken by either the Parent Link Worker accompanied by another member of staff; or by the Education Welfare Officer; or member of the Police.

It is our legal responsibility to ensure that no children are missing from education under the guidance of the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' legislation. Through regular and effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authority, we will strive to ensure that all children are accounted for and receiving a suitable education.

Persistent Absentees

Persistent Absentees are defined as children with an attendance percentage below 90%. This is equivalent to having one day off every two weeks. Persistent Absentees miss significant amounts of their education and are in danger of falling behind academically, socially and emotionally. These children will be monitored fortnightly by the EWS and Parent Link Worker (Mina Savani) to ensure support and strategies are put into place to help improve their attendance. If you would like further information about the impact that persistent absenteeism has on your child's future, please arrange to speak with Ms Savani.

Many children identified as persistent absentees at Abbey, are due to extended holidays each year to visit family members; particularly to India. It is important to remember that there are only 39 school weeks in a year and it is vital that we make each of these count. Parents are able to make extended trips abroad during the school holidays. Whilst we appreciate that COVID-19 restrictions have made travelling abroad more challenging over the past 18 months, we remind parents that planned visits should not be made during term time.

Authorised versus Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is when a child is genuinely too ill to attend school. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of an illness once a child has been away for more than two consecutive days.

Evidence will usually be an appropriate prescription, text message or appointment card (for their child with the correct date). We do not expect a letter from a doctor. Medical appointments that cannot be made outside of school hours are also authorised – though the school will request a copy of the appointment letter/text message. We expect parents to bring children to school before or after an appointment where possible. We expect parents to make routine doctor and dentist appointments outside of the school day. The school may also take account of and authorise other significant and infrequent absences; such as, bereavements.

In order to meet the demographic of our school, we authorise up to 1 day of religious observance a year. These days must be requested in advance in order to ensure registers are

accurate reflection of absence and Religious Observance days can only be taken on the day of the Religious festival.

Keeping your child off for any other reason will lead to the absence being marked as unauthorised. We will not authorise absences that could have been avoided and are unnecessary.

Punctuality

It is vital that children arrive at school on time each day. Children are expected to arrive between 8:40 and 8:55. Any children arriving after this time, must report to the school office as gates are locked promptly for safeguarding purposes. The office staff record latecomers and ask for a reason for lateness. Starting the school day on time is very important, any child arriving after the gates have closed miss the vital settling in period and our Everyday Calculations.

- Registers in class close promptly at 9.00am
- Late registration code (L) between 9:00-9:15am
- Unauthorised lateness code (U) given after 9:15am leading to an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Early Collection at Abbey Mead Primary Academy

At Abbey Mead Primary Academy, we have a formal process for parents and carers who may wish to collect their children during the school day for an appointment or specific event. Through keeping records of early collections, we are able to ensure an accurate record of our pupil's location ensuring they are accounted for throughout the school day.

Parents and carers will be requested to:

- Report to staff in reception
- Wait in reception patiently while a member of staff collects their child from the classroom
- Sign their child out with an explanation, date and time for their collection.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Holidays in term time will **not** be authorised. We follow government legislation with regards to absence requests for children in term time. The legal reference states that schools should not authorise leave of absence unless both of the following apply:

1. The Head Teacher/Principal considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application **AND**
2. An application has been made in advance by the parent

Where a child has a sustained leave of absence for a holiday or has a pattern of unauthorised leave of absence, you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days) or, your case could be referred by the Local Authority (Leicester City Council) directly to the Magistrates' Court.

Requests for compassionate leave will be judged on an individual case basis. Parents / carers must request permission for any leave of absence and must complete the leave of absence request form prior to any leave taking place. If any member of staff believes that a child is absent because of a holiday, the EWS will be asked to make a home visit. A suspected holiday will also incur a penalty notice and it will be up to the parents / carers to prove otherwise once the penalty notice is issued.

Incentives

At Abbey Mead Primary Academy, we recognise the importance of building good habits of attendance and support the children in doing so. To raise the profile of good attendance, we offer several incentives:

- Every week during the Friday Celebration assembly, we present the top attending class in the infants and juniors with a medal and place a sticker on the leader board. The class which has the most medals at the end of the incentive will be rewarded with £50 to spend on something for their class in order to build collective responsibility. If more than one class ties for the most medals, the £50 is shared between them.
- Children with 100% attendance for the whole academic year, receive a special attendance badge for their school lanyard.