



ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY POLICY

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 1996 / 2002
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended)
- The Education (Student Registration) England Regulations 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2010/2011/2013/2016
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) Keeping children safe in education
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'
- DfE (2021) 'Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (Covid-19)'
- DfE (2022) Working together to improve school attendance

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)
- School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police (DfE)

Abbot's Lea School recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for students within Abbot's Lea School to support learning and achievement.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our young people every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all students attend regularly and on time. Students should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all students to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all students achieve at least 97%. As a school, we define regular attendance as 97% or above. Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect students' learning. Students who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

The expected standard for attendance for any student in England is 97% or above. To put this statistic into context, it is deemed acceptable that they might miss only 12 sessions (or 6 days) over the course of a full academic year.

Once a student's attendance drops below 90% (this means they have been absent from school for 38 sessions, or 19 days in any one school year) they are considered a Persistent Absentee (or PA).

For a student who misses 50% of their school education (160 sessions, or 80 days) they are considered a Severe Absentee (SA).

Abbot's Lea School believes class teams, families, carers, students and all members of school community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality-ensuring students attend to achieve. This policy sets out how we will achieve this together

We believe that students cannot learn to their full potential if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our students take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all students are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a student's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the student and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind families of the importance of good attendance and its links to student attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of families is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

We believe truancy is a matter that we treat very seriously as we feel students are not only losing valuable learning time but they are at risk, as the school and their families are not aware of their whereabouts.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence

in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action. We have a duty to ensure that all families are aware of our 'legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders or penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school.' Families have a duty to ensure their children are well behaved and attend school regularly as 'good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects'.

We are aware that 'parenting contracts, orders and penalty notices for irregular attendance apply only to students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school' but they can also be applied for misbehaviour by students outside compulsory school age such as KS5 students or students at a maintained nursery. While 'penalty notices for families of students found in a public place during school hours after being excluded also apply only to students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school.'

We are aware that leave of absence can only be granted to a student only in exceptional circumstances and in authorising a holiday in term time we will take into account the child's attendance record, the child's age, the reason for the trip, the time in the academic year and the employment difficulties that families face by taking holidays in school holiday time.

We will exercise a consistent approach and ensure equity for all students.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that students should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To have in place procedures to prevent truancy.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.
- Maximise the overall percentage of student attendance and punctuality at Abbot's Lea School.
- Reduce the number of students who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Provide support advice and guidance for families, students and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for students.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.

- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.□

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- promote the importance of attendance and punctuality with all stakeholders;
- ensure compliance with all statutory student registration regulations;
- ensure the school office identifies and follows up all absence and lateness;
- ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
- set statutory attendance targets for the year that are realistic and challenging in order to raise school attendance;
- ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- monitor termly progress towards these targets by considering the following questions:
 - Has attendance improved?
 - Has punctuality improved?
 - Has parental response to absences improved?
- ensure the Headteacher exercises his/her discretionary power to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances for up to 10 days in an academic year between September and July which may include term time holidays;
- ensure the Headteacher does not authorise absence if it is to the detriment of a student's education;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to families;
- the responsibility of involving the School Council in:
 - determining this policy with the Governing Body;
 - discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
 - organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all students;
- reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Governing Body
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- nominate a link governor to:
 - visit the school regularly;

- ☐ work closely with the Deputy Headteacher;
- ☐ ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
- ☐ ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- ☐ attend training related to this policy;
- ☐ report to the Governing Body every term;
- ☐ annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

The link Governor is **Sarah Powell**

- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- work with the School Council to develop this policy;
- ensure all school personnel, students and families are aware of and comply with this policy;
- create a culture which encourages attendance;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure school personnel are fully trained in the registration process and with the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- ensure students are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- have in place a system for families to report a child's absence;
- question any parental explanation for student absence if there is doubt as to the validity of the explanation;
- expect an explanation for every absence and if one is not forthcoming then the absence will be categorised as unauthorised;
- remind families of their commitment to this policy;
- meet with families if they have applied for a holiday during school time;
- ensure school personnel are aware that unauthorised absence is absence without approval from the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences;
- when considering an application for term time holiday request will consider the:
 - ☐ time of year of the proposed trip
 - ☐ length and purpose of the holiday
 - ☐ impact on continuity of learning
 - ☐ circumstances of the family
 - ☐ overall attendance of the student
 - ☐ wishes of the families
- apply a consistent approach across the school and ensure equity for all students;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;

- improve teaching in order to improve student engagement;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - ☐ monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data
 - ☐ achieving results above the national average
 - ☐ looking at results from parent, student and school personnel questionnaires

Role of the Deputy Headteacher

In delivering the role of Attendance Lead, the Deputy Headteacher will:

- ensure that all school based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism etc is addressed;
- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the school office by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees;
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- adopt procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees;
- ensure early intervention in order to prevent absenteeism or truancy and to put in to affect a range of procedures to deal with this problem;
- send to families at the end of each week an attendance report on their child;
- support the Safeguarding Manager to identify cases of educational neglect and ensure timely referrals are made to statutory services
- ensure that 'welfare checks' are carried out If no response is received after three days unauthorised absence. If there are safeguarding concerns, contact will be made with the family as soon as possible
- target intervention and support to those students that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- ensure the 'voice of the child' is heard and all intervention plans are child-centred;
- agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- report to the Governing Body every term attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets;
- work closely with the link governor;
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

Role of the School Office Manager

The school office is responsible for:

- implementing the policy with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher;

- contacting families if they have not reported their child's absence by 10.00a.m;
- continuing to contact the families throughout the day until contact is made;
- contacting the key worker if a child is on the Child Protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- contacting families regarding concerns about their child's attendance;
- organising meetings between the Leadership Team and families to discuss their child's poor attendance;
- organising meetings between the Deputy Headteacher and families to discuss their child's truancy;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and families to discuss their application for a term time holiday;
- compiling attendance data reports for the Deputy Headteacher, the Governing Body and the SIP;
- ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date;
- ensure attendance information is accurately recorded on Arbor and CPOMS each day
- report to the families their child's attendance rate at the end of each week;

Role of Class Staff

Class-based staff will:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure students are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- ensure registers are up to date;
- contact home on each day of absence to inform families/carers about the learning that has been missed by absence and the timetable of activities for the following day;
- welcome the student back to school following absence and check the reason given by the student matches the information received by the school office
- accurately record attendance information on CPOMS and identify if follow-up action is needed and by whom;
- be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- make a referral to the multidisciplinary team (MDT) if they believe further therapeutic intervention is required to achieve good school attendance
- inform the Attendance Lead (Deputy Headteacher) if a family requests a part-time timetable
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with students and families;
- discuss individual student attendance at parent-teacher consultations;
- call an emergency review of an EHCP if interventions to improve school attendance have not resulted in increased attendance and the school are not able to meet the needs of the student as a result of this.

Role of the Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team will:

- undertake safe and well checks where there is a concern for the wellbeing of a student.
This includes a visit on the first day of absence for any student on the 'vulnerable student' list, if school are not able to make contact with home
- undertake home visits to complete a risk assessment for any student attending on a part-time timetable
- make phone contact daily with any student on a part-time timetable
- inform the Local Authority each time a part-time timetable is agreed
- only agree a part-time timetable in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.
- ensure a part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution.
- inform social care if a Looked after Child or a child subject to a Child Protection Plan is absent from school and no reason has been provided
- provide direct support to students who suffer from anxiety related to school attendance, attachment difficulties and other mental health issues
- provide holistic therapeutic support, guidance and interventions to promote good school attendance
- provide multidisciplinary support to families including home visits, training, Early Help and intervention plans
- work with outside agencies to promote good school attendance including CAMHS, Alder Hey, school nursing and YPAS

Role of Families/Carers

Families/Carers will:

- comply with this policy;
- work as partners with the school in the education of their children;
- ensure their children of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education;
- ensure their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- inform the school on the first day of absence;
- inform the school of any changes to their contact details;
- collect their children on time
- take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- avoid booking family holidays in term time;
- be aware that the Headteacher when considering an application for a term time holiday request will consider the:
 - ☐ time of year of the proposed trip
 - ☐ length and purpose of the holiday

- ☐ impact on continuity of learning
 - ☐ circumstances of the family
 - ☐ overall attendance of the child
 - ☐ wishes of the families
- be aware that where families fail to seek permission for time off then the absence will be treated as unauthorised;
 - be aware that it is not advisable to apply for a term time holiday during the first six weeks of any academic year
 - be encouraged to take an active interest in their child's work and to take an active role in the life of the school
 - encourage effort and achievement;
 - join the school in celebrating success of their child's learning;
 - supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.

Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent for not ensuring their child attends school regularly or may issue or apply for:

- Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Order
- Parenting Order
- School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes;
- analyse attendance patterns in order to improve student attendance especially those from vulnerable groups;
- make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve student attendance;
- try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools;
- share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities.

Role of Students

students are responsible for:

- being aware of the school attendance and truancy policy;
- knowing the value of good attendance;
- knowing the seriousness of truancy, attending classes during the school day and not playing truant;
- returning to school after a period of illness;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;

- liaise with the school council;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys.

Dealing with absence

It is important that we monitor data daily so that we can act quickly and use Early Intervention to prevent absence rather than try and fix it.

Weekly, class-teams will be sent the data that they will be expected to act on.

Class' role:

FIRST DAY ABSEBNCE AND MARGIN STUDENTS

- **Phone call** home for any student on their first day of absence
- **Phone call** home when any student drops below 97%, 90% or 50% to share that they are below expectation, PA or SA
- For any phone call home not picked up, a **voicemail** is to be left

If there is no engagement or improvement in attendance after a further 10 sessions (1 week), student to be **referred** to Middle Leader

Operational Leader's role (Stage 1):

STAGE 1

FOR DECLINING ATTENDANCE AND PA/SA

- Check with other Middle Leaders – are there any reasons why not to engage?
- If yes – there should already be a written plan
- If no:
- There should be an in-person meeting with a plan coproduced. Action plan to be reviewed with family bi-weekly.

STAGE 2

- If there is no engagement or improvement after 2 meetings, family to be referred to Deputy Headteacher (Attendance lead)

Attendance Lead role (Stage 2):

- Check with other Middle Leaders – are there any reasons why not to engage?
- If yes – there should already be a written plan
- If no:
- Student/family to work with Attendance Lead to coproduce an attendance action plan
- Action plan to be reviewed with family weekly

STAGE 3

- If there is no engagement or improvement after 2 meetings, family to be referred to the Headteacher

Dependent on the reason for such level of absence, the following may be explored:

- escalation of concerns as educational neglect
- escalation to the multidisciplinary team for therapeutic assessment and support
- referral to the school nursing service for support with absences linked to medical conditions or repeated ill-health
- request a meeting with families to explore the reasons for poor attendance and agree actions for improvement
- opening an EHAT (Early Help) assessment to provide holistic support to the family, with a focus on improved school attendance
- undertake a Graded Care Profile 2 assessment to better understand the lived experience of the child and their family

Dealing with Lateness

The Office will monitor lateness and inform:

- the Deputy Headteacher of patterns of lateness;
- families of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

Dealing with Truancy

If a student is thought to be a victim of truancy then the school will immediately inform:

- the police
- the parent/carer;

Our absconding protocol must be followed immediately if a student leaves school without prior permission.

Absence

Holidays during term time – term time holidays will not be authorised

Time off for exceptional circumstances - parent are asked to complete a term time absence form requesting permission to take their child out of school during term time.

Religious Observance – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for religious observance.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education. In most cases, only either the morning or the afternoon session will be authorised

Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Student Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are required to:

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a student's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the student's destination school and home address if the student is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new students, including the student's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school families are asked to:

- Give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If students leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the school website
- meetings with families such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- school events
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as the Headteacher's weekly newsletter

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers
 - ☐ the importance of good attendance and punctuality
 - ☐ all aspects of this policy
 - ☐ the use and understanding of attendance codes
 - ☐ authorised and unauthorised attendance
 - ☐ looking at trends and patterns

- ☐ bullying
- ☐ the needs of vulnerable groups
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any student and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.

Appendix 1

Protocol for students absconding from school

At our school, students with complex needs do, at times, disengage from the planned activities and this may include leaving the classroom, or leaving school buildings. Staff should use their professional judgment in supporting their re-engagement in all such circumstances. If a student intends to abscond (leave the school site without permission), you must continue to dynamically assess the risks this poses to the student in our care and take appropriate protective measures to ensure the risk of harm is minimised.

Please consider the steps below:

1. Stay calm and follow the student, taking a class or a personal mobile with you.



2. Contact the Office on 01514281161 or #2001 immediately. The Office will send internal communications and be on standby to inform the family of the student absconding.



3. If possible, reason with the student, ask them how we can support them to make the correct choice/return and explain that we will discuss the situation with them and try to help resolve it. Offer to facilitate their call to the family to let them discuss the situation with them, or a meeting with a preferred trusted staff.



4. If they still insist on leaving, contact the Office to activate contact with the family. If family cannot be contacted, the other emergency number(s) given by family should be phoned. If the student leaves the site, two members of staff should try to follow, if possible. Do not chase the student but try to keep them in sight. *If at any point, you decide that there is imminent risk of harm and you can prevent it by using Restrictive Physical Intervention safely, you should consider applying it (in line with Team Teach training received)*



5. If possible, the staff should walk with the student, try to keep them calm and encourage them back to school. How long the members of staff do this for is a matter of professional judgment – but a “reasonable” attempt must be made to return the young person to school.



6. If the student returns, update the Office who will call off the alert internally and advise the family that the student is safely on site. Allow the student to speak to the family member on the phone, if they wish to.



7. If staff cannot locate the student or are concerned for the student's safety, the staff must contact Office again. Office call the Police reporting a missing person (MISPER).

If the student has a social worker, they should be informed without delay.

Members of staff involved in the incident must supply statements, that should be uploaded onto the student's CPOMS record ASAP after the missing person (MISPER) situation occurs.



8. When the student comes back to school, a detailed investigation will be carried out. A support plan/actions will be put in place, recorded in CPOMS, and shared with the parents/family, and reviewed regularly to prevent absconding behaviour or until absconding behaviour stops.



9. Written records of the incident will be kept and recorded in CPOMS and shared with any relevant agency, including upon school transfer as part of safeguarding handover.



10. If absconding behaviour does not improve/stop, despite all internal support being activated (including MDT support), the school will request an emergency EHCP review to invite external scrutiny of the approaches used to-date, and to consider the need to change provision and/or placement.