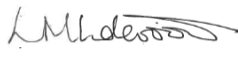


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		E Chester			
Attendance Governor		A Mansfield		8.11.24	



Avenue Primary School Attendance Policy 2024- 2027



Introduction

Avenue Primary School is a successful school with a good attendance record; this relies on every child playing their part. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The Avenue Primary School attendance policy is written in adherence with the law and also guidelines produced by the Department of Education. As such we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. It is therefore very important that you make every effort to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

This Attendance Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance and good punctuality are so important

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously impact their learning. This impact is not only limited to learning but can also extend to a child's social and friendship groups and where not corrected can lead to needless stress and anxiety for the child. Any pupil absence also disrupts teaching routines and so will affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help achieve this we will:

- provide up to date and reactive information on attendance on our website, via newsletters and via Teachers2Parents emails/ text messages;
- provide you with termly reports on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment;
- provide you with notification should your child's attendance drop below an acceptable level (92%) and set out clear expectations and methods of expected improvement;
- run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school;
- provide incentives in school to encourage regular attendance eg. non-uniform days for 100% attending classes in a week; class certificates for the high attending classes; termly certificates to individual children who achieve 100% (gold), 98.5%+ (Silver), 96.5%+ (Bronze);
- where an incentive is linked to whole class attendance, data for children with special attendance circumstances (eg. long-term illness), their data will be removed from the overall data for the purposes of the class reward.

Understanding types of absence

The school day is split into two sessions, a morning and an afternoon session. By law, every half-day session absence from school has to be classified by the school (**not by the parents/carers**), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

AUTHORISED absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason. These can include but are not limited to:

- illness;
- medical/dental appointments/treatments which unavoidably fall in school time;
- emergencies or other unavoidable unforeseen circumstances.

UNAUTHORISED absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school which the school does not consider reasonable and for which the school has not given consent. These can include but are not limited to:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (i.e. condoned absence);
- truancy during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to receive a register mark;
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are unwell, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. All problems with irregular attendance should be addressed by the school with the

parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better 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 usually make things worse. Where there is a known problem with attendance, parents should seek to notify the school as soon as possible so that together a solution can be found.

Persistent absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is classified as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the academic school year. It is also worth noting that this does include all extended periods of authorised absence regardless of circumstance. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to educational development and requires parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle it. We monitor all pupil absence thoroughly throughout the year and any cases which reach the PA mark or are seen to be at risk of reaching the PA mark are given priority and parents/carers will be informed directly.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents/carers are subject to intervention and where needed a 'Meeting of Concern about Attendance' takes place with a member of SLT/School's Attendance Officer and actions by school and home are agreed. Where needed, support from our ELSA team/Family Support Officer will be assigned for cases where the need is specific and required. All PA cases are also automatically made known to and where needed referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence with a full explanation for the absence. Our attendance hotline can be accessed by dialling the school number, followed by Option 1.
- Alternatively, parents are encouraged to contact the school using the office email address: office@avenue.leicester.sch.uk
- Contact the school on each further and subsequent day of absence.

NB: Notes/letters provided by parents/carers in explanation of absence will be stored on your child's file.

Failure to provide a valid reason for your child's absence on the first day they are away from school is unacceptable and will result in an unauthorised attendance mark until such time as the school deems a valid explanation has been given.

If your child is absent and we have not been notified as to why (see above for notification procedure), we will:

- in the event that parents do not contact school, parents will receive an email/text link to an online form which should be completed with the reason for the absence, and will continue to receive a link to a form until a reason for the absence has been provided on subsequent days;
- visit your home on the 3rd day of any absence where an explanation has not been provided;
- write to you to if we are concerned about your child's attendance or an emerging pattern of high-level absence;
- request medical evidence of reasons for absence (when attendance falls below 92%);
- invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher/Educational Welfare Officer in a 'Meeting of Concern About Attendance' if absences persist or overall attendance falls below 92%;
- refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern;
- in some circumstances, if a child is absent from school and has not been seen, we may arrange a visit to the home, possibly by the police, to do a "Safe and Well" check to establish that the child is safe.

If a child has an emergency medical or dental appointment, parents/carers are expected to inform the school of this. We appreciate that hospital and orthodontic appointments cannot be changed but expect that all other routine medical/dental appointments are made out of school hours.

The school is very aware that issues of attendance are sometimes due to factors beyond the control of parents/carers, such as a chronic illness or hospitalisation and the school is committed to working with parents/carers, the EWO and possibly the Hospital School to support the child.

NB: Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence. We therefore need to have parents' up to date contact numbers at all times. Please help the school to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number. Regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year will be made. We are required to hold phone numbers for 2 emergency contacts.

The Education Welfare Officer

Where a child's attendance has become an issue parents/carer are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. Where this is not possible, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will then also try to resolve the situation by agreement. If this is unsuccessful and the child's attendance still fails to improve, Officers will use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices and/or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school.)

Parents/carers may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. Educational Welfare are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority on 0116 454 5510.

Lateness

Persistent poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses registration, it disrupts their routine for the rest of the day and vital information from the teacher can be missed. Pupils arriving into school late also disrupt lessons and the learning of others. It can be embarrassing for the child and therefore also discourage further absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 9.00am in the nursery; 8.55am in reception, 8.50am in Years 1 & 2; and 8.45am in Years 3 to 6. Your child is expected to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked within 5 minutes of school starting and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

Children arriving late must enter the school via the school office/ report to the admin staff available on the Year 3 & 4 playground. Names of children arriving late will be recorded, with date, time and reason given. This also ensures that an accurate record is kept of who is in school in case of fire or other emergencies on the premises.

At **9.20am** 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 but instead a U code (late after registers closed). Where unauthorised absence marks and/or U codes exceed 10 sessions within a 10-week period parents could face a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

Punctuality is monitored every week by the Attendance Officer. Parents/carers are contacted in person, by phone or by letter if there have been four occasions of lateness within a 4-week period or there is a persistent pattern of lateness. The Headteacher will be kept informed and may choose to invite parents to a 'Meeting of Concern About Lateness' if there is little or no improvement after concerns have already been raised. The Education Welfare Officer may also be involved. Arrival at school between registration and 9.20am will be recorded as L (late) and the time of arrival will be recorded against the late mark on the child's record (if this exceeds 5 minutes).

If the child has a medical appointment and arrives after 9.20 am the register will be coded as M.

Parents are encouraged to approach the school at any time should you feel that there is a problem getting your child to school on time. Where appropriate contact has been made the school will look to how we are best able to support you with this issue.

The following strategies underpin our absence management:

Communicate clear expectations to parents	New pupil packs Parents' Evenings Attendance letters/emails /text messages Generic reminders in school newsletters (once per term)
Safeguarding culture	Reasons for absence Operation Encompass Knowledge of families
First day of absence policy	Absence phone line Email from parents via office@avenue.leicester.sch.uk Telephone call to parents Online form sent to email/text via 'Teachers2Parents'
Day 3 unexplained absence	Home visit Contact and discuss with 'DAS' (Social Care)
Governance	Attendance data and meeting with attendance governors (4 times per year) Attendance policy Attendance reported to FGB (4 times per year)

Poor attendance escalation process

<u>% Attendance</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>By</u>
96+	End of each term 'great attendance' message via Teachers2parents. (December, March, July)	VB
93 – 95.9	Monitor reasons for absence, patterns of absence Informal conversations with parents Personalised text messages just before the start of each half-term Attendance on internal tracker – SLT review weekly <i>(See DFE's 'Increasing attendance with parent messages')</i>	VB VB / NB VB JG
90 – 92.9	Personalised text messages just before the start of each half-term Attendance on internal tracker – SLT review weekly Medical Letters sent at 92% if more than two separate medical absences 'Meeting of concern' with the HT (Member of SLT), actions agreed Early Help Use of ELSA/ nurturing support to promote better attendance <i>(See DFE's 'Increasing attendance with parent messages')</i>	VB JG VB JG NB JU MM
Below 90	Weekly monitoring 'Meeting of concern' with the HT (Member of SLT), actions agreed EWO discussion at termly meeting Attendance panel with EWO and SLT Early Help Use of ELSA/ nurturing support to promote better attendance School Nursing Team referral Contact with GP FPN Legal Action	VB/JG JG VB/JG JG NB JU MM NB JG VB/LA LA

Holidays in term time

Taking holidays in term time will seriously affect your child's schooling and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking them away in school time. Leicester schools do not authorise absence for holidays during term time except in the most exceptional of circumstances. These will be looked at on a case by case basis and authorised at the Headteacher's discretion. Extended holidays need to be arranged within a normal school break, such as Christmas, Easter or the summer holiday so their impact is minimised. Therefore, any holiday taken during the school term will not be authorised and where the period of absence exceeds **4 days** the Local Authority will issue parents/carers with a **Fixed Penalty Notice**.

Fixed Penalty Notice: £160 per parent, per child (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days) per absence period. Where Penalty notices are not promptly paid cases will be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.

Where a child has had 2 periods of unauthorised leave for which the parent has been issued with a Penalty Notice (for each occasion), on the third occasion no Penalty Notice will be issued and the parent/carer will be taken straight to court under the higher-level aggravated offence. This means the parent/carer may be subject to a much more severe penalty e.g. a maximum fine of up to £2,500 or 3 months in custody.

That in any situation, we look back at absence during the current academic year and previous academic year.

These guidelines are set by the government and are in the best interests of the child and their education. Research shows that children who are persistently absent from school underachieve and that good school attendance is extremely important in terms of future choice, opportunities and income.

Leave of absence

As with requests for holidays during term time requesting a leave of absence for your child will only be authorised in the most exceptional of circumstance and at the headteacher's discretion.

Application process to request a leave of absence during term time:

- an application in writing should be submitted to the school in advance by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides;
- the Headteacher will then consider whether the reasons outlined in the application constitute "exceptional circumstances";
- parents will be notified whether or not the periods of absence can be authorised. If it is not authorised, parents will be notified and a **fixed penalty notice** will be issued from the **local authority (Leicester City Council)**.

If you decide not to take this holiday/leave of absence, you must notify the School and the Fixed Penalty Notice will not be issued and withdrawn.

Exceptional circumstances

As stated holidays and leave of absences will only be approved by the Headteacher under the most exceptional of circumstances. Where it has not be possible to submit a leave of absence request form, the child's absence will be treated as unauthorised until such a time that supporting evidence can be provided by the parents. The Headteacher will then consider as to whether to authorise the absence period retrospectively.

Reasonable adjustments: We will make reasonable adjustments for children with evidenced medical conditions or disabilities as part of our inclusive approach. Medical appointments or days of sickness as a result of their medical condition/disability will not be included for the sake of attendance awards, (although the government still includes these in our overall absence rate for the school). Other illness and absence will count in the same way as their peers' illnesses and absences do.

Religious observance: Similarly, we will promote diversity in our school by not including absences for the purpose of religious observance in our calculations of attendance awards (although the government still includes these in our overall absence rate for the school).

School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The attendance target for the school is 95%.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided via our fortnightly newsletter, school website and we ask for your full support.

The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code / description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (ie. pupil attending another establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Lates (before register closed)	Present
M	Medical / Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/ description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after register closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-statutory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Collection at the end of the school day

A record is also kept in the School Office of any children collected late at the end of the school day which is 3.05pm (Reception), 3.10pm (Yrs.: 3, 4,5, 6) and 3.15pm (Yrs.: 1, 2). If there has been no prior notification that a parent/carer will be late, a telephone call will be made to parents/carers to determine if there is a problem and how quickly the child/children can be collected and by whom.

If a child is regularly late being collected, 10 minutes after the end of the school day, the class teacher, Phase Leader or Headteacher will contact parents to request a meeting to discuss the situation. The child will be taken to the after-school care club and a charge will be made of £10.00.

Teaching staff have a wide range of commitments at the end of the school teaching day; it is not the role of teaching or office staff to supervise children who are collected late. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child is collected promptly from school. If, after a discussion with parents/carers has taken place, there is still no improvement, the child will be referred to Social Care (DAS). Any child still left at school after 5.30pm, whose parents we cannot make contact with, may be referred to Social Care (DAS).

Security of registers

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years and are stored electronically and backed up.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Headteacher: Louise Underwood (Jenny Goddard from 5.1.2025)

Attendance Officer: Vicky Bass

Attendance Governor: Abigail Mansfield

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible for every child to help all children reach their potential. Ofsted also consider attendance when inspecting schools.