



Abigail's Place

Attendance Policy



Approved by:	Yaf Yafai & Nina Stone	Date: November 2020
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Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Abigail's Place takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, loved and understood.
- Building secure reciprocal relationships with the children and young people who attend.
- Raising the awareness of the importance of an engaging and relevant curriculum.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

What is expected of the pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

Pupils should:

- Follow the school rules 'stick together, have fun, no hurts'
- Do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel they are being bullied.
- Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.

What is expected of the Parents/Carers:

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school and stay in school for every session that they have been registered. Parents should make sure that their children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure an education for their children. If a child is in foster care or a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where school attendance is concerned. They will be supported by close cooperation

between the school, Education Welfare Services and Children's Services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

Parents/Carers should:

- Offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- Seek help from the school if getting their child to school is difficult.
- Take family holidays during school holiday periods.
- Support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

What is expected of the School

- The school will endeavour to provide an environment where children want to come to school.
- They will work hard to build secure, caring and trusting relationships with the children and young people.
- The school will help break down the barriers to learning making school a less scary place to be.
- The school will recognise school based anxiety and use therapeutic practice to support children coming to school.
- The school will support parents and carers in getting children into school when this becomes difficult.
- The school will keep open communication and build trusting, supportive relationships with carers and parents.
- The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record the reason for the absence and whether it was authorised or unauthorised.

The school should:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- Meet the legal requirements set out by Government.
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1996 Education Act.
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.

- Develop procedures for the reintegration of long-term absentees.
- Develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO.
- Adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Lates

- The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at 9:00am. Teachers must ensure the registers are completed by 9.30am as they will close at 9.30am.
- Children arriving after 9:30am, will be recorded as late, unless it is due to transport issues as the Local Authority have responsibility for bringing pupils via taxi.
- Those children who have arrived later than 9.30am will be marked with a 'U' (late after registers closed) unless they have a legitimate reason eg. medical appointment ('M') or other acceptable reason ('C' – absent with leave), when it will be marked accordingly.

Absences

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally, either in person or over the phone. The school will decide whether to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The child lives over a certain distance from the school and the LA has either failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or make suitable transport arrangements.
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith.
- The child is absent "with leave" which, due to exceptional circumstances, has been granted by the school.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents/carers who have not offered a reason and after a four-week process will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance. It is the decision of the Head Teacher as to what might be considered an exceptional circumstance and parents should not expect their request to be granted as a right. We are therefore unable, legally, to authorise any holidays unless there is an exceptional circumstance. Parents can be fined for taking their children on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

Parents/carers are requested to write to the Head Teacher at least 6 weeks in advance of the proposed absence whereupon, if the leave is authorised, they will be notified of such in writing.

Monitoring

The Headteacher will review the attendance for all pupils weekly.

This involves:

- Monitoring weekly class attendance percentages
- Monitoring any issues connected with requests for leave of absence or explanations for illness, and intervening as appropriate;
- Reviewing list of pupils below 90% attendance, and intervening as appropriate i.e. when attendance/punctuality becomes a concern we reserve the right to pass the matter over to EWO should it be necessary;
- Monitoring persistent “lateness”

