

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Intent

Ashington Learning Partnership is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience and to contributing to our firm commitment to the safeguarding of all pupils. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. The Governors, Executive Principal, Head of School and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Bothal and Central Primary Schools.

We define our key levels of attendance as:

100%	Outstanding
Over 97%	Good
95.6% and over	Satisfactory
Under 95.5%	Requires Improvement
90% and under	Inadequate

PRINCIPLES

The following important principles underpin our approach to managing attendance:

- Excellent attendance promotes excellent learning. There is a strong correlation between attendance and an individual's achievement. We know that if a pupil misses a lesson then it is harder to engage and catch up in the next lesson.
- Excellent attendance plays an important role in our ability to safeguard pupils.
- Early intervention is important in order to prevent absence from having a significant effect on progress and a pupil's attitude towards school.
- Support for pupils plays a very important part in improving attendance. There are a number of reasons why an individual's attendance may be low. As an organisation we need to know the individual pupil and their situation in order to be able to intervene effectively.
- Education for pupils and families is needed in understanding why attending school is important and how they can improve it.
- A positive learning climate is vital for promoting good attendance. Every member of staff has an important role in ensuring that pupils feel safe, welcome and valued so that they want to attend school.
- Rewards can be a motivator for many pupils and can both directly and indirectly improve attendance.

- Sanctions will be used as a last resort. Our principal aim is to encourage and reward good attendance. Where a pupil or their family are refusing to engage with their education and the support we offer, sanctions will be pursued through the Education Welfare Service.
- Targets and tracking for individuals, classes and whole school are important in promoting excellent attendance and identifying strategies which work.
- Indirect factors can play an important part in promoting attendance (such as high quality curriculum and teaching, good facilities and catering).

Parental Responsibility:

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school every day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe. Parents should inform school when their child is returning. School starts at **8.50 am** on the Lower Sites and **8.35am** at the Upper Sites. All pupils are expected to arrive on time, those that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

While we are aware that attendance under the age 5 is not statutory, it is an expectation that if you are awarded a place in our Little learners or Nursery you will attend regularly and arrive on time. This sets up good habits for the following years.

Role of School staff

At Ashington Learning Partnership there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with the Attendance Officer at each school taking on the overall responsibility.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and at the start of the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The attendance officer checks the registers and monitors all attendance daily. Where a child is absent and no reason is given the class teacher will issue an attendance slip to request reason for absence.

All school staff will also support 100% attendance by ensuring all pupils are welcomed into school in a warm and supportive way. They will create a positive learning environment by making sure each pupil feels valued and lessons are stimulating and accessible for all pupils and this will extend to pupils who are late.

Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance

- 95% - letter 1 will be sent to parents drawing attention to the drop in attendance
- 93% - letter 2 will be sent to parents asking them to an attendance panel, where a Commitment to Improve agreement will be drawn up. This will outline what the pupil, parents and school can do to improve attendance. At this meeting we will also show parents a visual representation of their child's absence compared to the attendance of an average child in their child's class. This letter will also explain that absences will not be authorised unless medical evidence is provided.
- 90% - The pupil becomes a persistent absentee and will be referred to the EWO

Referral to the Education Welfare Officer:

If there are ongoing concerns with a pupil's attendance and should it fall below 90% despite support from school, the case will be referred to the EWO. Where a pupil has a poor attendance history they may be referred to the EWO at an earlier point if attendance begins to drop.

Meetings with parents/ Attendance Panels:

Where a child's attendance drops to 95% letter 1 will be sent home, if attendance continues to drop letter 2 will be sent out if it reaches 93%. The school will invite parents to a meeting, usually with the Education Welfare Officer in attendance, to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit - usually no more than 4 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them, this will include but is not exclusive to medical evidence for absences.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head of School and the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Please see circumstances below: Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school. See the Safeguarding Policy for more details.

Expectations of the School

Regular communication with parents about the importance of excellent attendance and their child's individual pattern is vital in promoting attendance. This will be done through reports, parents' evenings and letters as well as phone calls for specific issues and texts to highlight absence.

Rewards

Excellent attendance shall be rewarded as part of the school rewards system. Each school will have a system to reward both 100% attendance and significant improvements in attendance over time.

Punctuality

We expect pupils to arrive on time for all registrations and lessons. A pupil will be deemed late if they arrive at school after the morning bell but before 9.05am. At 9.05am the register will close and pupils will be marked as having an unauthorised late (a U code). If a pupil is regularly late this may result in a referral to the EWO as lateness impacts on overall attendance.

Authorising Absence

Leave of absence:

The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends regularly. There is no automatic right for a parent to take their child out of school in term time. Any time out of school is detrimental to learning. The Head of School will only grant leave of absence during term time in very exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence form must be completed and returned to the school at least two weeks in advance of any proposed absence.

If a parent removes their child from school without requesting or being granted leave of absence, this may result in a referral to the Local Authority.

Unauthorised Absence:

All registers will close at 9.05 am and 1.15 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

If absence is frequent or continuous school will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their pupil's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised.

The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 1 week**, the absence will remain unauthorised. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school on the first day of absence. Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances".

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a member of the family or person close to the family.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the head of School can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Internal or Post-Registration Truancy:

This occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education leading to significant gaps in learning, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. ALP schools take this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact the names of the pupil's contact list; we will then call the police after 30 minutes of notification.

Work for absent pupils:

All pupils are set regular homework. This will be deemed as sufficient work for short term absence. For more extended absence, for any reason, the school may set specific and relevant work for a pupil. The school will follow the national regulations in setting work for excluded pupils.

Collaboration between Trust schools:

The Trust has a significant opportunity to promote excellent attendance across the whole school community. It is recognised that outstanding attendance at a young age is more likely to continue as a pupil moves through their school career, while poor early attendance is likely to lead to persistent absence later on and to be a bad influence on younger siblings.

Procedures for children Joining an ALP school

There is a close collaboration between the ALP schools and where a child joins one ALP school from the other their attendance status will move with them.

Where a child moves from another school there will an induction meeting between the parents, the child and the Attendance officer to outline the importance of excellent attendance and the implications of poor attendance. They will also be asked to sign the home school agreement.

Chair of ALP:

Date:

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TRUST ATTENDANCE GROUP

The Trust Attendance Group comprises

- Janice Rochester Deputy Head (Pupil Premium and Wellbeing)
- Sue Arkle representing Bothal Primary
- Debra Element representing Central Primary
- Louise Hall, DSL representing Bothal Primary
- Gillian Trood, DSL representing Central Primary
- Gemma Craik, the Trust Attendance Governor

The Trust Attendance Group will meet on a termly basis and will be responsible for coordinating the drive on attendance and collaboration between schools. Each term's meeting will include data updates from each school with analysis of progress, a review of strategies and sharing good practice. We will also coordinate family intervention through EWOs and an LA attendance representative.

Reporting to Governors and the LA:

The designated Governor will carry out regular monitoring visits to support and challenge the key staff on managing attendance. They will report back to the SIGs on a regular basis. The staff member responsible for attendance will attend SIG meetings to report on attendance if requested. Reporting to the LA will be done through the Census. A representative from the L.A. may attend the ALP Attendance Group meetings to share good practice.

Target setting for school and pupils:

Whole school and year group targets will be set by the Head of School, with agreement from the Executive Principal and designated Governor. These will also be communicated with the ALP Attendance Group. All reporting and progress should be measured against these targets. Communication with pupils will be focused on the targets identified at the top of this policy. Individual targets may be set for pupils when it is deemed appropriate, for example in re-integrating them back into school.

Recording attendance:

Attendance and absence will be recorded through am and pm registers and will be the formal record of attendance for a morning or afternoon session. It is very important that registers are completed accurately and punctually so that an accurate record of who is in school is available and so that absence can be dealt with appropriately.

Recording lateness:

Pupils who arrive at school after the morning bell but before 9.05am will be marked as late, represented by code L. Pupils who arrive at school after 9.05am should be marked as unauthorised late, represented by code U.

Communicating with parents:

Regular communication with parents about the importance of excellent attendance and their child's individual pattern is vital in promoting attendance. This will be done through reports, parents' evenings and letters as well as phone calls for specific issues and texts to highlight absence.

Monitoring and tracking:

Monitoring attendance and punctuality will be carried out on several levels the process is identified within each school's individual procedures.

Authorised, Unauthorised and Persistent Absence:

We will follow the L.A. and national guidelines on the definitions of authorised and unauthorised absence. While there is an important distinction between the two, any absence from school leads to gaps in learning and can make it difficult when a pupil returns and authorised absence will be discouraged. Persistent Absence is defined as less than 90%; this will be monitored closely and the Education Welfare Service involved with any pupil with significant unauthorised absence. Where absence does not improve then further action may be taken by the EWS in line with national guidance.

REGISTER CODES

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 (i.e. pupil attending other 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	Late (before registers 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 registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	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