

Airedale Junior School
'Aspire - Believe - Achieve'

Attendance Policy 2018

Airedale Junior School

Introduction:

This is a successful primary school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Aim:

There is a direct correlation between Attendance and Attainment. The aim of the Attendance Policy is to raise levels of attendance and punctuality.

Objectives:

Reduce absence and lateness, and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. Include all school staff, parents, pupils and Governors in School Attendance Matters. Develop a robust electronic data handling system, enabling school staff the LA and Dfe to access statistical data in order to work effectively in partnership. Work effectively with parents/carers and partner agencies, using a range of strategies to improve the attendance of individual pupils and the whole pupils.

Law:

Section 444 of the Education Act states that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. Parents therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's school attendance. Failure can lead to legal action being taken by the LA in the Magistrates court, or the need to issue Fixed Penalty Fines. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence, Section 444 (1A) where a parent knowingly allows their child to be absent from school. This offence can carry a custodial sentence.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Government research shows that 17 lost learning in one school year can lead to a drop of one grade at GCSE and SAT level.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

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

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To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular school newsletter, weekly through the school APP and Facebook;
- Report to you yearly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates, stickers and being part of the 100 Club and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. We expect that parents make appointments for dentist/doctors opticians outside school hours.

Unauthorised Absence:

These are absences which are not permitted by Law, eg birthdays, shopping trips, days out and Term Time holidays and absences where no explanation has been received. The School will discuss unauthorised absence with the EWS and further action may be agreed. Amendments have been made to the 2006 Regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013. The amendment removes references to family holidays and extended leave and the threshold of ten school days. The amendment makes clear that headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is school policy to adhere to these amendments.

The School does not authorise holidays taken in term time and works in partnership with schools across the Trust and the EWS regarding the issue of Fixed Penalty Fines. Pupils have an entitlement to an education, not a term time holiday.

Fixed penalty notices may be issued by the school when a child has been absent for 10 or more sessions.

Currently, any penalty notices issued in relation to school attendance are for £60 per child, per parent, if paid within 28 days, rising to £120 if paid within 42 days. Subsequently to these times, court action should be pursued. As of 1st September 2013, the timescales to make payments will be reduced, meaning that penalty notices will be £60 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. They will then be progressed to court. The council code of conduct in relation to fixed penalty notices has been amended to address this.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

The Learning Mentors will meet with parents to review the reasons behind the persistent absence and offer support to the child and/or family. Continued persistent absence will result in the school implementing fast track procedure. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence - you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents 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.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Learning Mentors and the headteacher if absences persist;

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- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance becomes a problem.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your daughter by making sure we always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents 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. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the LA Education Welfare Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

EWS/LA

The EWS will work in partnership with the school to promote and facilitate improved attendance, at an individual level, even through a referral system or using the Fastrack to Attendance Programme; and at whole school level using proactive strategies and Action Plans.

The EWS will work with children and families to ensure their school attendance and safeguarding is maintained.

EWS will provide advice and guidance with regards to children missing Education. Child Employment and Licensing.

EWS will work in partnership with other agencies and will offer advice and signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations.

EWS will undertake legal action on behalf of the school.

The LA will support the school with networking and training events and with individual School Audits and Action Plans.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts promptly **at 09.00am, with the school doors open from 8:50am** and we expect your child to be in class by 08.55am.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am 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 and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the **Learning Mentor, if this persists you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher** to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

If the late record still persists then a fixed penalty notice may be issued as your child will have a number of unauthorised absences which exceeds ten sessions.

School targets, projects special initiatives:

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

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96.8% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

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 area.

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 in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Wells, Miss Cowling, Mrs Ellis, Mrs Hooley: Learning Mentors

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Mrs Robinson, Headteacher
Education Welfare Service

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.

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.

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