



ABC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Revised February 2020

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Students need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. ABC fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure students are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

ABC is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavor to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. For a student to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and guidance.

Each year the school aims to examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and state attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving it's set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of students who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to model the statutory requirements of the UK and International best practice. In line with this we expect that parents/carers must ensure that students of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Significant absence from school may be an offence. An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the pupil was absent with leave agreed by school staff (authorised absence);
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause;
- the absence was on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs;

A student at ABC is considered to be of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A pupil ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. At ABC students are registered for school at the start of the day.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and Board of Directors at our school work together with our members of staff to ensure that all students are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and the Board in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and students of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy also applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff so that all students realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in students a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school

attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.

- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting students who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, the Board, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual students attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Principal any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the Board.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Principal with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher/Mentors

Class teachers/Mentors are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Head of Section where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Principal

The Principal is ultimately responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues (or may instruct the Head of Section to act as his Deputy).
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the Board
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Board
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

Staff in the School Administration are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head of Section/Principal
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

All the school doors open at 8.00 am until 8.30 pm. This time is sufficient for all students to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher/mentor has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 8.15am (Attendance code / and \\ for students who are present).

All attendance records are documented using iSAM's software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.15 am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.15 am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those students who are late, this is documented on iSAMs the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.00 am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Principal has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Principal and the Board to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Board.

The school will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to the Board from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Board may visit once a month to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 85%). They work with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff, has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the iSAMS' attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Principal to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

School Procedures

Any student who is absent from school at the morning registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 08.15 am. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorized absence code will be entered.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

First Day Absence

Parents/guardian(s) are expected to contact the school before 08.30 if it is known that the student will be absent. In case the parents do not contact the school, the Administrator will contact the parents/guardian(s) to ask for an explanation. The Administrator shall make a note of the reason for the absence, and forward this to the mentor/form tutor or other proper person, where the absence will be registered. Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00 am to 9.30 am on a daily basis, to identify those students who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Third Day Absence

In case the student is absent on the third day, and the parents/guardian(s) have not contacted the college, and nor has the Administrator been able to contact the parents, an e-mail and a letter is sent to the parents/guardian(s). In the e-mail and letter, which has the same content, the parents/guardian(s) are asked to contact the college immediately.

Continuing Absence

In case the student is continuing the absence, and the parents/guardian(s) have not contacted the

college, and nor has the Administrator been able to contact the parents, another e-mail and a letter is sent to the parents/guardian(s). In the e-mail and letter, which has the same content, the parents/guardian(s) are asked to contact the college immediately.

Ten Day's Absence

Any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team. The college will include details of the action that we have taken.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

The Principal will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of ABC to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absence, the college will try to resolve the problem with the parents/guardian(s). If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the College Health Service if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the student counselor.

Planned Absences for five days or more

Planned absences for five days or more **require** Independent Study Plans (ISP), which have been arranged in advance with the mentor/form tutor.

If your child is ill or away from school five days or longer please contact your mentor/form tutor or administration office to obtain the necessary paperwork for an Independent Study Plan.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The Home/School agreement can be used in this way.

Holidays in term time

Holidays during term time are to be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider authorising up to

10 days absence (or more in very exceptional circumstances) but parents must apply in advance for permission.

Attendance Awards

The school may reward students who have good or improving attendance.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our schools targets are:

2015/2016 90 %

2016/2017 93 %

2017/2018 96 %

The registration system

The School will use *a computerised system* for keeping the school attendance records. The following codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
-	Other/unknown	Unauthorised
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
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Exceptional circumstances School closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

Registers will be kept for at least 3 years.

Computer registers shall be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes. Alternatively electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These shall also be preserved for at least three years.

Entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. *Unauthorised absence*

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. *Authorised absence*

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid.

3. *Approved Educational Activity*

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration