



Appleton CE Primary School Whole School Attendance Policy

Introduction

Appleton CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child 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 children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

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

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

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

School Expectations

Expectations of pupils:

- That they will attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 100%.
- That they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

Expectations of parents/carers:

- That they will ensure their child/ren attends school, aiming for a 100% attendance rate.
- That they will contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical (e.g. by 9.00am) whenever their child is unable to attend.
- That any absence is followed by an explanation (conversation, phone call, note or email) of why the child was absent and for what period of time if it is more than one day.
- To ensure that their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day.

- To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- To refrain from taking their child/ren out of school for holidays, or occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances.

Expectations of school

- To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- To make early contact with parents/carers when a child fails to attend.
- To refer to appropriate support agencies as required.
- To communicate clear expectations of what is good attendance.

Expectations of Governors

- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy through Headteacher reports.
- To support the school in encouraging good attendance.

School Procedures

Registration

- Registration periods are 8.50 and 1.00pm and registers will be completed during these periods and returned to the office at the end of registration. Any pupil that arrives up to 9.20 am or 1.30pm for the afternoon will be marked as a late (before the register closes). After this time they will be marked with U for unauthorised absence.
- Registers will be completed using the codes identified in Appendix A.
- If no information, regarding the absence of a child, has been received by 9.00am, the office will telephone the parent to check the reason for absence.
- If there is no reason or explanation of the child's absence this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The decision to authorise an absence is taken by the Headteacher or Acting Headteacher, following statutory requirements and the school's policy on attendance.

Authorised Absence

- Absence will be authorised if the school has notification from the parents/carers that their child is ill. This should usually take the form of an initial notification at the beginning of the period of absence and regular communication during the absence to update the school of the child's well-being.
- If the child has a medical appointment that cannot be made outside school hours, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Children are expected to attend school prior to and after a medical appointment where possible.
- If an absence has been requested and approved in line with the school procedures then this will be an authorised absence.

An absence may not be authorised, even if the parents give a reason, if the absences are persistent. In the case of repeated absence due to illness, the school will request confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on their ability to attend school regularly.

Unauthorised Absence

- Any absence that is not considered to be the result of extenuating circumstances may be unauthorised.

Lateness

Children are recorded as Late if they arrive after 8.50am but before 9.20am (or after 1pm but before 1.20pm). If they arrive after the registers are closed the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Persistence Lateness

In the case of persistent lateness the parents/carers will be asked to work with the school to address this.

Holiday Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are ***exceptional circumstances***. Parents/carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

- Requests for absence for holidays during term time will be considered by the Headteacher/Acting Headteacher.
- Requests for absence for holidays during term time will only be considered if there are exceptional extenuating circumstances. Parents will be expected to attach a letter outlining their extenuating circumstances with the absence form. Issues such as parents' employment conditions related to non-negotiable holiday dates, the time of year and level of previous attendance will be taken into consideration. Leave under exceptional circumstances can only be granted as a 'one off' occasion in the child's attendance at Appleton CE School.

If a holiday request is refused by the school, but the child is still taken on holiday the absence is then unauthorised. The matter can be referred to the County Attendance Team who can issue a Penalty Fine.

Frequent Absence

- In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parents/carers. The Headteacher will liaise with the County Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.
- Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward. This may include support from the Home School Link Worker or the County Attendance Team.

Response to non-attendance

- If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents/carers, the parents/carers will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the school will use the contacts list provided by parents.
- Where there has been no response, or explanation, the school will post a letter to the parents/carers requesting information regarding the absence.

- Where there continues to be no response to the school intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will refer the issue to the County Attendance Team.
- If a child's attendance slips below 90% the school will initially write to the parents/carers expressing concern about levels of attendance and offering support. If the situation does not improve, the Headteacher will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance Team if appropriate.
- If a child is repeatedly late, the school will initially write to parents expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the Headteacher will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance Team if appropriate.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have.

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

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/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors 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 parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Leave of Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

Penalty Notice may be considered in the following circumstances:

- At least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks.
- A leave of absence that has not been approved due to exceptional circumstances during term time, of a least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 5 weeks.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) equivalent to 20 sessions of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks.

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:

- Attendance registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years;
- Entries in paper registers must be in ink;

- All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)
- Daily registers are returned to the school office after being marked (data transferred to the electronic system) and safely stored until the next registration point.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration 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 pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

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

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

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

APPENDIX A

Absence Attendance Codes

/ Present (AM)
\ Present (PM)
B Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C Other authorised circumstances
D Dual registration
E Excluded
F Extended family holiday (agreed)
G Family holiday (not agreed)
H family holiday (agreed)
I Illness
J Interview
L Late (before registers closed)
M Medical/Dental appointments
N No reason yet provided for absence
O Unauthorised Abs
P Approved Sporting Activity
R Religious observance
S Study leave
T Traveller absence
V Educational visit or trip
W Work experience
School closed to pupils & staff
Y Enforced closure
X Non-compulsory school age absence
Z Pupil not on roll
- All should attend / No mark recorded