

ABBEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL



Aim, Aspire, Achieve @ Abbeys

Abbeys Primary School

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Attendance Policy

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*In the event of Central Government changes on school attendance, this policy may be reviewed earlier.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction	3
2 Aims	3
3 Overview	3
4 Expectations	3
5 Responding to Non-Attendance	4
5.1 Student Absence	4
5.2 Absence	4
5.2.1 Authorising Absence	4
5.2.2 Holidays	5
5.2.3 Unauthorised Absence	5
5.3 Punctuality	5
5.3.1 Start of School Day	5
5.3.2 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)	5
6 School Organisation	6
6.1 Parents	6
6.2 Authorised or Unauthorised Absence	6
6.2.1 General Absence	6
6.2.2 Approved Educational Activity	6
6.2.3 Other Circumstances	7
6.3 Lateness	7
6.4 Ensuring Student Information is up-to-date	7

1 INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance is important

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Abbeys Primary takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its children. 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.

2 AIMS

This policy outlines the aims and expectations of Abbeys Primary School to support children's attendance at school.

3 OVERVIEW

No child should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment, ready to benefit from the education offered to them. Situations beyond the control of students and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.

The vast majority of students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

4 EXPECTATIONS

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually;
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend;
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework;
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

5 RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a child does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively, for safeguarding purposes.

In cases where a problem may appear to be emerging, the Headteacher or the Attendance Officer may telephone the families concerned or invite parents/carers to meetings about attendance discreetly, to discuss the situation with them.

5.1 Student Absence

Parents/carers are asked to inform school on each day of absence before 8:50 am if their child is either ill or if they know that their child will be arriving late. If a telephone call is not received from parents/carers, they will be contacted by the school by telephone on each day of absence. Absences not explained can be marked as unauthorised. Should the school not require parents/carers to telephone about absence, e.g. when a child is expected to be absent for some time for hospitalisation etc., the school will inform parents whether they are required to telephone in.

When a student is late into school, i.e. after the 8.50 bell, it is important that their parents/carers sign in the student at reception on arrival. They will receive a late mark in the register.

It is essential that our contact details are kept up to date and ask that if parents/carers change either address or phone numbers then these details are given in at the Office so our records can be amended.

Where we are unable to speak to parents/carers on their home telephone line then we will attempt to contact them on the day contact telephone number they have provided.

5.2 Absence

It is the school that authorises absence. Parents/carers provide a reason for children being absent from school. It is at the discretion of the school as to whether this reason is acceptable or not.

The School may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to each parent/carer who fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school. This currently stands at £60 (for those who settle within 21 days) and £120 (for those who pay within 28 days). The school works within the guidelines set out in the Milton Keynes School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.

5.2.1 Authorising Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. An absence can only be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness of the student concerned (Not of the parent or another family member);
- A medical or dental appointment;
- For the purpose of religious observation;
- Family bereavements;
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available;
- Fixed term exclusion;
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

5.2.2 Holidays in term time

We advise parents that Abbeys Primary School follows the guidance from the Local Authority which states that School Attendance is compulsory and the Department of Education stance that parents should be discouraged from taking holidays during term time.

If Parents/Carers take children out of school for a holiday, which results in the child missing 10 or more sessions, (5 school days) the school will refer this to the Local Authority who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, consideration of whether the child attends school regularly is no longer relevant. An FPN can be issued to each parent and is per child. If a fine remains unpaid after 28 days, then parents/carers may be prosecuted under S444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

5.2.3 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips;
- Holidays in term time;
- Minding the house or looking after siblings;
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation;
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified;
- No reason given;
- School staff has cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid.

5.3 Punctuality

5.3.1 Start of School Day

The school day begins at 8.50 am and it is made clear to students that they must be present to be registered at that time. In support of this, the playground is open from 8:45 am and is supervised.

The register for the morning session will close at 9.00 am. Students arriving after this time will be marked late on the register.

The School may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to each parent/carer where the child has persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed. This currently stands at £60 (for those who settle within 21 days) and £120 (for those who pay within 28 days). The school works within the guidelines set out in the Milton Keynes School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.

5.3.2 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% (90% or below) 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 parent's 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.

6 SCHOOL ORGANISATION

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff at Abbeys will prioritise attendance and where appropriate discuss the importance and value of education with the children. In addition there are specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff. There is an attendance officer that works with the school one day per week to support the school in respect of attendance & the school administrator who monitors attendance on a day to day basis.

6.1 Parents

Abbeys Primary School expects parents to:

- Make contact with the school on the first day of absence and every subsequent day of absence thereafter, unless the School asks you not to do this;
- Provide signed and dated absence notes for all absences;
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

6.2 Authorised or Unauthorised Absence

6.2.1 General Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

6.2.2 Approved Educational Activity

Where students are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as

present for calculating data for the DfES absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations students who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category:

- Educational visits

6.2.3 Other Circumstances

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a child being absent from school. It is for the Head teacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

6.3 Lateness

Schools should actively discourage late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.

Registers will remain open from 8.50 till 9.00. In the event of bad weather this period can be extended at the discretion of the Head teacher.

6.4 Ensuring Student Information is Up-to-date

Schools should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on students and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies are effective. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

Parents/Carers are requested to complete an appropriate sheet annually at the start of the academic year and to inform the office of any changes as they happen.