



WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE & REGISTRATION POLICY 2020 - 2023

Purpose

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 17 years of age) must get a suitable, full-time education. There are clear links between attendance and attainment, attendance and behaviour, and attendance and safeguarding children. Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring the attendance of their child/ren at the school at which they are registered. The Local Authority is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities.

Summary

- Avenue Junior School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.
- We will endeavor 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 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 the guidance produced by the Department for Education
- The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving the best attendance possible.
- This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Status

Statutory

Who/what was consulted?

This policy has been written by Debbie Dismore (Executive Head Teacher), Mike Hooper (Head of School) and the Teaching, Learning and Pupil Wellbeing Committee using guidelines issued by Norfolk County Council with regards to the guidance from the DFE School Attendance August 2020 with the additional updated guidance 28.8.20 to reflect COVID situation.

Relationship to other policies/procedures

- Home School Agreement
- Whole School policy for Safeguarding
- Supervision Policy
- Appendix A – the Law

Roles and responsibilities

Whole school

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The School will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its target and to ensure that it meets with any legislative changes. Regular updates in response to changes made relating to the COVID period will be reflected in the annexe to the policy.

Date approved by Full Governing Body: 12th October 2020

Date for interim review: September 2021

Date for full review: September 2023

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COVID Amendment

During the period that the country is following COVID guidelines the school will follow the advice laid out in the September 2020 guidance : Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year

(www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year)

Pupils with confirmed or suspected COVID 19

If pupils or anyone in their family has symptoms of COVID 19 they must not attend school.

Symptomatic but unconfirmed cases

Pupils should not come to school. They should self-isolate and get a test.

If a pupil tests negative and the rest of the family test negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

Confirmed cases

Pupils are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) They must not come to school and must follow government guidance. If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.

The school will liaise with the relevant health bodies if a member of staff or pupil tests positive.

Communication with the school is vital in order to protect the whole school community.

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Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

Our Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what parents/carers will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

It is the school's duty to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full time education to which they are entitled; and,
- act early to address patterns of absence

Additional Headteacher Responsibilities

- To ensure that all staff are aware of the contents of the policy
- To use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their child/ren receive their education. This will be done in a variety of ways e.g. individual meeting, group meetings, home school agreements and through the distribution of information leaflets
- To provide statistical data with regard to the School's attendance figures to parents, the Governing Body, local and national authorities as required
- To be aware of and investigate episodes of frequent absences as dictated within the policy.

Staff Responsibilities

- To be aware of the contents of the policy
- To report to the Headteacher any concerns relating to a child's attendance record
- To use opportunities as they arise to positively enforce to children and parents/carers, the importance and benefits to education of all children through good attendance record.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- To perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly (see Appendix A – the Law)
- To show that they value their children's education and are interested in what they do at school. To be aware of the effect that absence can have on a child's potential achievement
- To emphasise the importance of school attendance and to avoid absence requests wherever possible. This would include trying to make dental/medical appointments out of school hours.
- To encourage and help children to get ready for school in plenty of time

Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents/Carers will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Head teachers will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term-time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

An absence request form must be submitted to the Headteacher. (Appendix B). Following guidance from the DfE and on the advice on the local authority a letter is issued to parents annually in September, or when they join the school to advise parents of the consequences of planned term time absences. This letter can be found on the website and is updated

annually. The DFE guidance documents make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless 'exceptional circumstances' prevail. The regulations also state that head teachers should determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school in the event that leave is granted for 'exceptional circumstances'.

Further guidance for exceptional circumstances is given in Appendix C and based on advice from the NAHT.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher 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 will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the DFE (August 2020)

Registers

Class teachers are responsible for completing a marksheet at each registration period. The office manager is responsible for ensuring the correct codes are entered into the SIMS management system on a daily basis.

Lateness

(The timings given in this section will not apply during the COVID period – a period of 30 minutes after the given time for the staggered starts will be allowed for the registers to remain open. Any children arriving after their given time period but before the close of register will be marked as late and contacted by the attendance team)

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45am. Registers are returned to the school office at 8.55a.m. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil 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 authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 12.45p.m. (Yrs 3 & 4) 1.20 p.m. (Yrs 5 & 6). Registers must be returned to the office within 10 minutes.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close.

Absences

First Day Absence

Parents/carers are required to telephone the School (01603-441034) by 10.30 am on the first day of the child's absence, and leave a message clearly stating the child's name and the reason for the absence. If no reason for absence is received by the School; it will contact the telephone numbers supplied, including the emergency contact telephone number. A message will be left with the emergency contact if we cannot get in touch with a parent /carer.

Second Day Absence

If no explanation for a child's absence has been received, the Head teacher will ensure that the School contacts the parent /carer by telephone in order to seek clarification of the reason for the child's non-attendance.

Continuing Absence

If still no explanation for a child's absence has been ascertained, the Head teacher will ensure that the School contacts the parent / carer by letter in order to seek clarification of the reason for the child's non-attendance.

Tenth Day Absence

Any child absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to the Norfolk Pupil Attendance Service. (This is a legal requirement). The School will include details of any action that it has already taken.

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.

Frequent Absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the office manager to be aware of and bring attention to the headteacher, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. All staff should also be vigilant around the issue of frequent or unusual attendance.

The office manager and the Headteacher meet at least half termly to discuss levels of absence and lateness. This is followed by a termly meeting with the local attendance officer. Early contact is made with parents for attendance under 90%, without a valid reason which may be in the form of a letter, a meeting at the school or a visit from the Parent Support Advisor.

Persistent Absence [PA]

All pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% may be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Headteacher and the Local Authority Attendance Officer if appropriate.

The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance including the Parent Support Advisor, the Attendance Officer and the Headteacher.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils 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.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

- Attendance is celebrated in full assembly by awarding the class with best attendance with a Weekly Attendance trophy and certificate
- Pupil certificates are awarded on a termly basis for 100% attendance.
- For those children who have been subject to careful attendance monitoring or have been involved in attendance panels, letters are sent to parents and children when a significant improvement has been made

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories. (PLEASE REFER TO COVID GUIDANCE FOR ADDITIONAL CODINGS RELATED TO THIS)

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 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.

Note Pupils 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

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered with, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

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 or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview with another educational establishment	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 *	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID 19)	Not counted as absence in the school census
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

***Code X:**

not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) (This code is not counted as an absence in the school census) This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care or
- any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Record preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years.

Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups and will be available for each month.

Register Security

Registers or attendance marking sheets if used must be safely stored and kept in a locked room when school is closed. All registers are kept in the office once completed.

Removal of Children from the Register

For every child leaving the school, except at the end of key stage transfer, a Child Missing in Education (CME) form is completed by the school and sent to the LA along with the child's electronic record. This is the responsibility of the office manager.

A pupil can be removed from the register for the following reasons **after consultation with the authority/confirmation from another school:**

- the pupil has been registered at another school and the school has confirmed this
- the school has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school (Home Education must be informed)
- the child is leaving the country to live abroad. A forwarding address must be obtained and if possible the school they will be attending.
- the pupil has been permanently excluded from the school.

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.

Whole School Target: 96% Persistent Absence Target 2%

Review

The Headteacher provides the Local Authority with termly information regarding levels of attendance and persistent absence including details of interventions and current data regarding fast track interventions. This information is presented to the governing body as part of the Headteacher's termly report.

This policy will normally be reviewed every three years but may be updated in light of any legislative changes.

Appendices

A 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.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Attendance Targets

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education (School Attendance Targets)(England) Regulations 2007

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.

Appendix B



Name of School: Avenue Junior School

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Please note: taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress

Full name of child(ren)

Address

Leave requested from _____ to _____

Total number of school days _____

Reason for application:

I/we have read the information on the reverse of this application and would like to formally request the leave of absence as shown.

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s) _____

Date: _____

Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been agreed/not agreed.

Signature of Headteacher _____

Please note: Retain the original signed and completed forms in school records and ensure a copy is returned to the parent/carers of the student to confirm authorisation.

Leave of absence during Term Time

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is however, a discretionary power to allow leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This is not an entitlement and purely at the discretion of the schools head teacher.

Schools should not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during school exam periods and SAT's.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show 10 days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence; however some schools may choose to do this.

The government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Discuss with the school any request for leave of absence prior to making a booking. Your child's school may have a designated person for this. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure you receive confirmation from the school before the leave is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation.

Fixed Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the school.

The school will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

The penalty is in the form of a £60 fine per parent/carer per child payable within 21 days, this increases to £120 payable per parent/carer per child within 28 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

*(Academic year =school year from September to July)

Appendix C

Guiding principles for authorising requests for absence

1. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Head teachers will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term-time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
2. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.
3. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'.
4. Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to 'exceptional circumstances', but the amount of time authorised should be proportionate and not extensive.
5. Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, again, not for extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
6. Schools may wish to take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
7. Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
8. Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or a crisis.
9. It is acceptable to take a pupil's record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.
10. It is important to note that head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorised.