



Aireborough Trust & Guisseley School Attendance Policy

Approved:	Summer 2018
Reviewed:	Summer 2021
Governors' Committee:	Curriculum and Policy
Responsible Officer:	Assistant Head – Attendance

Section 1: Introduction, Ethos and Background

This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality and, as a consequence, raise levels of achievement.

This policy is written with regard for the legal powers and duties included in the following:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010; and
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

We believe that there is a clear link between attendance and positive outcomes for children and young people. Research findings and learning from best practice shows that:

- Students must attend regularly to achieve their full potential
- Students who miss out on school can feel vulnerable and left behind
- Leave in term time is disruptive and can seriously affect your child's education.
- On average students who consistently miss 17 or more days in a school year lose one full grade in their GCSE's
- Unauthorised absence can lead to prosecution.

The following shows the link between % attendance at school and number of days absent:

- 98% = less than 4 days absent in one school year.
- 95% = less than 10 days absent in one school year.
- 90% = 4 weeks (20 days) absent in one school year.
- 85% = 5½ weeks (28 days) absent in one school year.
- 80% = 7½ weeks (38 days) absent in one school year.

Over a period of 5 school years' students with an average attendance of 85-90% will have missed half a school year of education while students with an average attendance of 80% over the same period will have missed a whole school year.

Our aim is to therefore is to encourage full attendance for all students at Guiseley School.

We do this by:

- Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- Ensuring that students feel safe at all times
- Developing a strong sense of citizenship within our students
- Offering a curriculum that engages and inspires
- Ensuring high quality teaching at all times
- Encouraging, praising and celebrating achievement and success

This policy outlines the process by which parents/carers can request leave under exceptional circumstances for their child/ren. In addition this policy provides clear procedures regarding absence through illness and the school's response to illness and absence. This policy follows the latest Government legislation and guidelines and is the culmination of detailed consultation with both Leeds City Council. It has been developed and agreed by the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust (ALPT) to ensure consistency, fairness and clear decision making in relation to school absence.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

At Guiseley School we are clear that attendance is everybody's responsibility. By working in partnership with parents, carers, students and other professionals, we seek to ensure every child has an attendance that meets or exceeds the Guiseley School target of 97%. Outlined below are the roles and responsibilities of key staff within school and how they will help to ensure this target is achieved:

Assistant Headteacher (Attendance)

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will provide a strategic lead throughout the school by line managing key members of attendance staff, supporting other school leaders in the effective deployment of resources, ensuring compliance with the policy outlined and having oversight of cases that are being prepared for formal prosecution. The Assistant Headteacher will also be responsible for data analysis and reporting to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.

Key Stage Co-ordinators

Key Stage co-ordinators will have an overview of attendance and priorities within their key stage. Alongside the Assistant Headteacher and attendance team, they will be instrumental in identifying attendance trends for both individuals and cohorts of students. Alongside this, Key Stage co-ordinators will be responsible for identifying barriers to attendance and developing and implementing strategies to help students overcome these barriers. Key Stage co-ordinators will be integral in ensuring attendance remains a priority for staff and children within their key stage and will do so through regular communication, sharing of data, supporting difficult cases and rewarding excellent attendance as well as improvement.

Key Stage Teams

Key Stage teams will support the Key Stage co-ordinator in using data to identify priorities, recognise barriers to attendance and plan to overcome them. Key Stage teams will work directly with students to assess and review attendance, set targets, complete attendance trackers and review progress. Key Stage teams will also be integral to supporting, and challenging, students with poor punctuality, whether to school or lessons. Key Stage teams will be involved in the communication around attendance to staff, students and home.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer plays a critical role in the management of absence through illness, leave or other means. They are the key point of contact between home and school and will ensure contact is

made in all cases on the first day of absence. Where absence is ongoing, the Attendance Officer will provide a bridge between home and school and will develop an understanding of the barriers to attendance and, through liaison with other colleagues in school, plan to overcome those barriers.

As well as the attendance of children in the school building, the Attendance Officer will also monitor and record the attendance all students attending any offsite learning opportunities.

The attendance officer will lead on the 'Fast Track' part of the attendance system by monitoring data and trends, issuing warning letters, monitoring for improvement and following up the appropriate course of action.

The Attendance Officer will work with the Key Stage co-ordinators and Assistant Head to identify a 'casework' cohort where additional support is required. In these cases, the Attendance Officer will track and log all actions and interventions and, where attendance remains stubbornly low they will prepare the evidence for prosecutions. They will also be responsible for reporting children as missing education where this is appropriate.

All Attendance Officer communication will be logged on SIMS.

Administration Assistants

Administrative assistants will ensure that registers are completed and that follow up systems are enacted where there are any concerns. They will respond to any gaps in attendance on a lesson-by-lesson basis by instigating safeguarding checks and notifying parents in the case of any unaccounted absence or other concerns. This is usually via SIMS In Touch text message.

Form Tutor

Form tutors have a critical role in supporting their form group with regards to attendance, punctuality and target setting. As well as taking the register for morning registration they should be aware of general attendance patterns, reasons for absence, who the persistent absentees are in their form group and support all efforts to improve attendance. The form tutor will be central to monitoring absence notes and ensuring attendance improvements are recognised early and full weeks are celebrated. Where appropriate, form tutors will escalate concerns, intelligence and information with regards to absence. Form Tutors will play an integral role in ensuring the planner reflects current attendance, attendance targets and that catch up systems have been administered and are being followed.

Class Teacher

It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure the register is done within the first ten minutes of every lesson, without exception. Class teachers should plan for and provide catch up work and have a dialogue with students about positive or negative attendance patterns and the impact on learning in their subject.

Supporting Attendance

In order to support great attendance, we will record two attendance sessions a day (AM and PM) and report student attendance at fixed periods throughout the year. During lessons, we will also ensure registers are complete and that all children are accounted for as this is a key part of our safeguarding protocols. Students with great attendance will be acknowledged and celebrated

through the use of achievement points and, therefore, eligibility for our rewards programmes. Students who we feel need to improve their attendance will be set targets and supported in identifying barriers to attendance and, wherever possible, removing or overcoming these barriers.

Attendance data will be used to plan for effective strategies, analysis the impact of the school's work and identify priorities and areas for improvement. Data will be used to:

- Monitor individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons
- Identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality
- Identify students who should be celebrated for great attendance or significant improvement

Term Time Absence and Requests for Leave

Parents/Carers do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time without prior permission and agreement by the Headteacher or those granted that level of authorisation by the Headteacher. In the event of exceptional circumstances parents may request leave during term time in writing and using an Exceptional Circumstances request form available on the school website. Each application will be considered by the Headteacher, or the member of Senior Leadership with delegated responsibility, who will decide whether or not the absence is to be authorised and the number of days. **Please note leave will not be considered retrospectively.**

In the event that unauthorised leave is taken, then the school will consider a fixed penalty fine.

Please note, it has been agreed across the Aireborough Trust that we cannot take into consideration the impact of other Local Authority school holidays, continental shift patterns or public service shift patterns when considering holiday and leave requests.

The Attendance Policy is an agreed policy within the Aireborough Trust. As such, we may liaise with other schools within the Trust and the Local Authority to moderate decision making processes and consistency of approach.

Fixed Penalty Fines

Under the latest Government Legislation parents / carers who take their children out of school during term time, without authorisation, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the Local Authority and could face possible prosecution in court.

In Leeds, a penalty notice will be issued for unauthorised absences of five days or more within a twelve week period and as an ALPT School we are fully committed to this policy.

The penalty notice includes absences for holidays as well as other unauthorised absence. If a penalty notice is issued, it will be for the whole period of absence. So the penalty would be the same for an absence of five days or ten days.

Fines are issued for each parent and each child so, for example, a family of four with two parents and two children will be fined a total of £240. The penalty will double if the notice is not paid within 21 working days. If it remains unpaid, it will be passed for prosecution at the Magistrates Court.

School Responses to Absence

At Guiseley School we value great attendance and work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure every child is accessing their education. As with every school, and in line with DFE guidance, we make a distinction between ‘authorised absence’ and ‘unauthorised absence’. Below are some examples of both, but please be aware this list is not exhaustive:

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised absence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical appointment (with letter) • Family bereavement • 2 days of religious observance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained absences • Family holiday in term time • Truancy • Birthdays

Our responses to non-attendance are evidence based and intended to be implemented at the point of most impact. Below are the key stages for parents and carers to be aware of:

- 95% +** Attendance is positive and a cause for celebration
- 93% +** Attendance is reasonable but could be improved. School will be monitoring.
- 90 – 93%** Attendance is becoming a concern. A letter outlining the risk of persistent absence will be issued other than in exceptional circumstances
- <90%** Attendance will no longer be authorised without a medical note
- 75% - 90%** In the event that attendance is between 75% and 89.9% or if there are ten missed sessions over a twelve week period, the school will undergo a risk assessment and, unless there is absolute satisfaction that the absences were unavoidable, school will undertake the ‘FastTrack’ initiative in line with DFE guidance. This will then lead to a period of monitoring for twenty days and if there is no immediate improvement, a School Attendance Panel will be convened and a fixed penalty notice warning letter may be issued. Once a fixed penalty notice is issued, any further unauthorised absence could lead to a fixed penalty fine.
- <75%** Where attendance is below 75% there will be a ‘casework’ allocation and there will be an ongoing risk assessment of whether to recommend a ‘FastTrack’ process or pursue further levels of prosecution.

Although we are aware that there are times absence may be inevitable or unavoidable, we commit to undertaking a thorough risk assessment process for cases under 90% to ensure that our decision making is fair and consistent.

Appendix 1: Guidance on authorising absence / leave requests

Leave categorisation	Authorised?	Number of days	Other information?
Death of immediate family member	Yes	5 + 1	Up to 5 days + one day for funeral with additional consideration where required
Death of extended family member	Yes	1 + 1	One day + one day for funeral
Religious Observance	Yes	2	2 days i.e. Eid = one day for each observance. If in doubt, consult with local place of worship
Hospital Appointment	Yes	1	Only authorised with letter from hospital / professional
Medical / dental Appointment	Yes	.5	Unauthorised without letter
Sports Representation	Yes*	HT's Discretion	* Representation at city, regional and above
Weddings	Yes	1	One day for family

As a Trust, we recognise that there will always be exceptional circumstances that sit outside the confines of this policy. The Headteacher reserves the right to consider individual applications on the merits of each case.