



Attendance Policy

Date of New Policy: September 2016 (amended based on NCC model policy September 2017, reviewed September 2018)

Date adopted: September 2016

Person responsible: Mr Paul Henery (Headteacher)

Date for review: September 2018 (amended in September 2017, reviewed September 2019)

Acle St Edmund C of E 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 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.

Each year the school will set attendance / absence 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 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 must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark on the class register without good explanation

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55am. The registers will remain open for thirty minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless an explanation given is accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.15 pm for all classes.

The registers will close ten minutes after this time.

Pupils 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. Registers will be completed, using SIMS, by class teachers (or TAs / supply teachers where a teacher is absent or having their designated PPA time).

Punctuality

It is vitally important that all children arrive at school punctually. Pupils feel ready and organised for the day ahead if they arrive at school on time. Pupils can arrive at school from 8.45 am each morning, when the school playground will be supervised by a member of staff. If children arrive late to school they are likely to miss valuable learning time (for example, the teaching input for either English or Maths in KS2 or part of the guided reading programme in KS1) and their late arrival can be unsettling and have a detrimental effect on other pupils' learning too. If your child does arrive

at school after the bell has rung on the school playground (at 8.55 am), he/she should report to the school office in the first instance, explaining the reason for lateness, before rejoining his/her class. A "late book" is maintained in the school office which helps us to follow up cases of repeated lateness. If your child is repeatedly late for school, you will be contacted by letter and asked to come in to talk to the headteacher to discuss the issue further.

First Day Absence

Parents are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence, either by phone, letter or via another parent, to inform the school of the reason for absence.

If staff note a child's absence and do not have information as to the reason for absence, the secretary will contact parents by phone the same day. The register will then be amended according to the response received.

If a child is still too ill to attend school the next day (or more) the parents need to let the school know on a daily basis, unless a doctor's note has been sent in or seen by the office staff. The school office staff will contact parents on each subsequent day of absence by phone unless a reason for absence has been given.

Third Day Absence

If no reason for absence is provided by the third day a standard letter will be sent to parents, as well as trying to make contact in the usual way. This reminds them of their duty to keep schools informed for reasons of absence and asks them to contact the school immediately.

Fifth Day Absence

If there is still no reason for absence provided then the school will make further contact with home to find out why the absence is persisting.

Ten Day's Absence

Any pupil 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 Staff for the local area. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the school attendance administrator to be aware of and bring to the attention of 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 with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will discuss the problem with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer and take appropriate action.

Persistent Absence (PA)

All pupils whose attendance level falls close to, or below, 90% will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the school attendance team working with the Attendance Improvement Officer.

The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance.

Frequent Medical Absences

The school will discuss with the School Health Adviser those pupils who frequently miss days for medical reasons.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that 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. This will be done in class, through discussion with the class teacher or TA.

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 foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. Parents/ carers will be reminded of their responsibility to ensure children receive a full education at every opportunity; this will include reminders in newsletters, information on the school website, letters to parents, discussion at Parents Evenings and information in school reports.

Leave of Absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's achievement.

From September 2013 the Government introduced some significant changes to attendance regulations for pupils at school, particularly in relation to term-time family holidays. (The following wording is also on the absence of leave form parents must complete before taking any term time holiday / leave).

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Applications for leave of absence will be looked at on a case by case basis.

Examples of what might be considered as such could include:

- Service personnel returning from / scheduled to embark on a tour of duty abroad.
- Where a period of leave has been recommended as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence may be requested from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.
- Attendance at the wedding / funeral of a close family member (usually one day)

Other times when permission would be given would be for educational activities such as music exams, religious observance or sporting competitions.

The school will **not** accept as an exceptional circumstance the fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time, or is being taken as a birthday treat. The school will **not** authorise requests where a holiday booking has already been made.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. If you do need to take your child out of school during term time, please respect the regulations under which we must now work and **make very clear on the 'Leave of Absence' form how the circumstances are exceptional.** If this is not clear, the leave will not be authorised.

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.

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.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have:

- 1 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term time (for absences from 1 September 2017); or
- 2 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday

The intervention could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Any pupil at Acle Primary who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

Attendance Awards and Sanctions

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance. Pupils who achieve 97% or more attendance in an academic year will be commended by certificate at the end of the summer term. All pupils with 100% attendance will receive a special certificate. Pupils who have made a significant improvement in attendance will be commended by letter.

Regular screening of attendance and punctuality will take place throughout the year (at least termly). Parents of pupils whose attendance falls close to 90% may be contacted by the school to discuss attendance further; all parents, whose children's attendance falls below 90%, will be asked to come to an attendance panel. Further support from the Attendance Improvement Officer will be sought if improvements in attendance are not made.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil 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 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 School will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records.

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 <u>or</u> 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	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized 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)	Unauthorized 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	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

Record Preservation

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

Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups through SIMS.

Alternatively electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years.

Register Security

The registers must be safely stored. Registers are taken to the office after registration.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the headteacher will be responsible for overseeing this work. The school will make use of the attendance data available on the 'RAISEonline' system, when setting its' target. Targets will relate to national averages.

Attendance Governor

The school's named Attendance Governor is Dr Rodney Edrich.

Appendices

1 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] 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.