



## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

The aim of this document is to explain the responsibilities for you as parents / carers to ensure your child attends school regularly and sets out in return what Abbotswood Primary will do.

### **Vision Statement**

"Aim High, Believe & Achieve"

In order to deliver our Vision Statement, Abbotswood Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates of children who are well enough to come to school in order to ensure that all students are able to take full advantage of the learning and social experiences available to them.

### **Rationale**

It is widely recognised that setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help your child later on and into adult life; it is a worthy learning point on its own. Being punctual is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, the teacher, and the other children in the class. Abbotswood Primary believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. **Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.**

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources– can have on improving pupil attendance.

For a pupil 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 pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The below table highlights how attendance and punctuality are linked to a pupil's attainment.

97% -100% Attendance	Lowest Risk: Best Chance of Academic Success A student who has 97% attendance has still missed 5 days of education across an academic year.
95% - 97% Attendance	Risk of Underachievement 95% means a student misses 8 days of education across an academic year.
93% - 95% Attendance	Serious Risk of Underachievement 93% means a student misses 13 days of education across an academic year.
90%- 93% Attendance	Severe Risk of Underachievement 90% means a student is missing 18 days of education across an academic year.
Below 90% Attendance and below	Extreme Concern of Underachievement 80% attendance is the equivalent of missing one year out of 5 years of education or 39 days of education across an academic year.

### Aims

At Abbotswood Primary School, we are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

### Rights and Responsibilities

Abbotswood Primary School, accepts the role and responsibilities, as outlined below, in partnership with parents and carers. Good attendance at Abbotswood Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, staff and Governors. We all follow what is asked of us by the Government and this can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

#### The Senior Leadership Team, supported by the office staff:

The SLT, supported by the office staff, are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance – if no contact is received from a parent or carer, a text message will be sent. Follow up phone calls and home visits will be made where no contact has been made.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the Local Authority (LA) / Education Welfare Officer (EWO) of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

#### Governors

The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

#### Staff

The school staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The school exclusively holds the authority to authorise absences and will employ the DfE absence codes for coding each instance. Authorised absences typically encompass reasons such as sickness, unavoidable medical/dental appointments, religious observance, or exceptional family circumstances like bereavement. Authorisation will not be granted for absences related to activities such as shopping trips, birthdays, airport visits, family reunions, buying shoes or getting a haircut.

## Parents and carers

It is the legal duty of each parent to ensure that their child obtains an education, either through regular attendance at a school or through alternative educational methods. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents or carers may be reported to the Local Authority if their child(ren)'s absence from school is a significant cause for concern which could also lead to a school attendance meeting following the Education Act 1996.

As parents or carers, you are responsible for:

- Ensuring that your child arrives to school punctually at 8:40am and is ready to start lessons at 8:50am.
- Reporting if a child is unwell, with a telephone message which should be left on **01454 867777 as early as possible and no later than 9:20 a.m.** on each day of absence stating the reason the child cannot attend school. Be aware that a letter or phone call does not in itself authorise the absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation will authorise the absence.
- Communicating with the school every day you child does not attend.
- Providing proof of medical or dental appointments when absences require further justification.
- The attendance of your children at school. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible – by phone call or in writing. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is provided by the parent.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if your details change.

## Absence

There are only two categories of absence from school:

**Authorised – approved**

**Unauthorised – not approved**

Only the Executive Headteacher or Head of School can approve an absence from school.

Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department of Education Guidance on School Attendance.

### **Authorised (approved) absence – types of authorised absence that may be approved –**

- Leave of absence – requests must be put in writing to the Executive Head via e-mail and will be considered on a case by case basis
- Medical absence for appointments – non urgent routine check-up appointments should be made for after 3:30pm or during the 12 weeks of school holidays over the year. Students are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day.
- Illness – parents can use the NHS toolkit if they are unsure about whether their child is well enough to attend school [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#) Parents/carers to contact office via phone on each day of absence.
- Religious observance – the Executive Headteacher must be informed of this in advance
- If a student is suspended from school for a behaviour related incident, this is an authorised absence.

### **Unauthorised (not approved) absence – types of absence that will not be approved**

- Absence due to birthday, shopping, looking after family members
- Holiday in term time
- Late arrival to school after the register has closed has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence
- Sustained period of illness (4 or more days) without medical evidence

This is not an exhaustive list but gives examples of unauthorised absences. Only the Executive Headteacher or Head of School can authorise an absence from school.

**Parents are required to contact the office via telephone no later than 9.20am on each day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.**

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by text message as soon as is practicable

on the first day that they do not attend school. A follow up phone call will be made later in the day if no contact has been made. When needed, a home visit will be performed.

Abbotswood staff will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto our census system.

Abbotswood Primary will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, we reserve the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness or it is needed for specifics of a medical plan, an education healthcare plan, or it has been requested by a body such as the EWO.

In the case of Persistent Absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to a member of our attendance team. In addition to the regular review meeting we hold with the Education Welfare Officer, we will also inform them of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if we and the Local Authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

### **Holidays**

The Department of Education's guidance strongly encourages schools to take a much firmer stance on absence authorised in term times. OFSTED also judge a school in part on its level of absence, authorised and unauthorised alike. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday.

Abbotswood Primary School always shares term dates and dates of INSET days in advance of the term. We publish them on our website and remind you of them in the school newsletters. Advance dates of school terms are always published on the South Gloucestershire website <https://find-information-for-adults-children-families.southglos.gov.uk/>. It is important that parents and carers book holidays during the stated holiday periods.

### **Leave of absence**

Abbotswood Primary, in line with national expectations and rules, will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, we will expect parents to contact the school in writing **at least two weeks prior** to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence, the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur and the booking information.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account where it is required for us to do so. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. Abbotswood Primary will not grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays. If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in a penalty notice.

### **Fixed Penalty notices**

Fixed Penalty Notices (often known as Penalty Notices) is a fine issued by South Gloucestershire Council to parents/carers of a child who has failed to attend school regularly and whose absence is unauthorised. It does not require the parent to attend court but is an alternative to prosecution in the magistrate's court. Parents/carers who pay the fine in full within the time limits cannot later be prosecuted for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates.

### **Why are there Penalty Notices?**

Reducing absence from school is a key priority of the government and local authority because missing school may limit a pupil's attainment, disrupt school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime and overwhelming evidence shows that regular school attendance increases positive life outcomes.

## **From 19th August 2024**

If your child has **10 or more sessions** of unauthorised absence **within 10 school weeks**, after 19th August 2024, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. There are two sessions in each school day (morning and afternoon). The sessions of absence can be consecutive (for example 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday in one week) or not (for example 10 sessions of unauthorised absence, spread across the 10 school weeks).

### **When might a Penalty Notice be issued?**

A Penalty Notice may be issued to any adult with day-to-day care of a child in one or more of the following circumstances where **10 sessions of absence are recorded in 10 school weeks**. These periods can span across terms and years on a 10-week rolling cycle. Penalty fines are issued per parent per child. Unauthorised absences could be made up of:

- Arriving in school late after the taking of the register, where no other code applies; (U)
- No reason being provided for the absence (O)
- Term time holiday being taken (G)

Where illnesses occur before or after an agreed holiday, these may be included in the penalty fine unless the school has evidence of the holiday booking information. It is therefore in the interest of the parents to provide this information.

### **Children missing education**

We have a duty to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is on the school roll, not in attendance and whose whereabouts we have not been able to establish. This particularly applies to students who move to another authority or county but are not yet in education but may also apply to pupils whose parents have not contacted us to explain why their child is not in school.

### **Home education**

Parents have a right to educate their children other than at school. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from school to pursue this option, this decision must be put in writing to the Executive Headteacher. The school will then complete a form with the students' details and send it to the Local Authority.

## **Monitoring**

Concerns about absence from school and the likely impact on a pupils' progress will be communicated to both pupils and parents through our attendance procedures.

### **Daily**

- The office staff collate messages left by parents/carers regarding absence and enters the correct code in the register
- Teachers take attendance registers in the morning and afternoon and enter present or an absence code
- Office staff enter late arrival marks in the register
- Office staff or the attendance officer contact parents/carers to follow up reasons for not being in school and add notes to the registers

### **Weekly**

- Attendance for all students is monitored by the Attendance Officer. Particular focus is on those pupils below 95%, those pupils who have a high number of broken weeks and pupils identified as vulnerable.
- Attendance issues are shared with the staff team where needed

### **Monthly / Termly**

- Meetings between the Attendance officer and the Education Welfare Consultant regarding pupils below 95%, children with a high number of broken weeks and particular groups of children where no improvement is shown.
- School Attendance Meetings are set up with students, parents and the Attendance Officer
- Letters are sent to parents of pupils with below 95% attendance or a high number of broken weeks
- School attendance meetings with parents as agreed
- School Attendance Meetings with parents follow a staged process with the aim being to investigate the reasons for low level of attendance and to look at what is needed to secure and sustain an improvement. Formal procedures are implemented when this intervention does not bring about change.

**Monitoring and Review**

This policy is a working policy and will be subject to regular review in practice. The school will periodically review the process to ensure that it continues to work effectively.

Written by: Sian Griffiths Date: 17/09/2025

Approved by: FGB Committee Date:

Reviewed by: FGB Committee Date:

Next review: September 2027

Signed..... Date .....

Chair of Full Governing Body

## Appendix 1

### Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any

reason **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and are subject to specific special circumstances linked to this, which have been discussed with the school
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- circumstances when the school is declared closed

Pupils away from school for the following reasons can be regarded as present for statistical purposes.

- The pupil is attending an approved off-site Educational activity or is receiving special off-site tuition,
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed school hours are 8.45 to 3.15 (KS1 / EYFS) and 8.40 to 3.10 (KS2)
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g., a birthday)
- the pupil is visiting relatives
- the pupil is away from school due to a parent or sibling illness
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday

#### **Persistent absence (PA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for

any reason. **Missing (in) education**

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school.

## Appendix 2

### How much is the fine?

