



**UL Attendance Policy 23/24**



# Avonwood Primary School

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# Attendance Policy

## Introduction

Here at Avonwood Primary school, we believe it is of vital importance that our pupils have good attendance at school. This is a successful school, and all pupils play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve of their best. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at Avonwood Primary, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment<sup>1</sup>. Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching group by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at Avonwood is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## Aims

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at Avonwood this policy sets out:

- **Section 1:** the practical procedures to be followed at Avonwood in relation to attendance.
- **Section 2:** the measures in place at Avonwood to promote regular attendance by its registered pupils.
- **Section 3:** the responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.
- **Section 4:** the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly.
- **Section 5:** the school's strategy for addressing any specific concerns identified in relation to attendance.

## Section 1: Practical Procedures

This section sets out the practical procedures to be followed at Avonwood Primary in relation to attendance are as follows:

- The attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leave of absence and informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence.
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis (such as a class teacher, attendance officer, admin team etc) and for more detailed support on attendance (such as pastoral lead, Safeguarding team or SLT)

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<sup>1</sup> [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

- The school's day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence.

There are clear links from this policy to our safeguarding and child protection duties as set out in the Keeping Children Safe in Education document. [KCSiE Summary of Responsibilities](#)

### **1.1 The School Roll**

As a school, we are responsible for keeping the Admissions Register up to date. This contains specific personal details of every pupil along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.

We also hold emergency contact numbers for each pupil. It is our policy to hold more than one such number, so that we have options to make contact with a responsible adult should the need arise.

A pupil's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances.

When a pupil leaves Avonwood Primary School, they will not be removed from the school roll until they have been accepted onto the roll of another school or until we have authorisation from the Local Authority (LA) to remove the child from the school roll. We will make all reasonable attempts to locate the child.

### **1.2 The Attendance Register**

The register will be taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the school will record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

The Attendance Officer, will inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system (e.g., home education).
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school.

- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

### **1.3 Punctuality and Regular Attendance**

Class teachers take registers at the following times: - 9.00am and 1pm daily.

The school day starts at:

**EYFS/KS1** - 8.50 am, no later than 9.00am main gate closes promptly. The school day ends at 3.05pm.

**KS2** - 8.40 am, no later than 8.50am the doors close promptly. The school day ends at 3.15pm.

### **1.4 Lateness**

Pupils who arrive after 9.00 am are deemed as being late. Pupils who arrive after this time must enter the School via the Main Office. They must then be signed in using the lateness book located in Reception. This disrupts the class which will have already started the lesson. The class teacher will need to interrupt the learning and deal with the late arrival which has a significant impact on the whole class, their learning, and the lesson. Teachers have a huge amount of education to deliver in a school year leaving very little time in the day to catch up.

For pupils that arrive after 9.30 am, this is an unauthorised absence mark, and it will affect your child's attendance. A member of the safeguarding team monitors attendance daily and regular reports are run to check on lateness. If your child is late more than three times in a half term period, you will receive a spotlight letter to inform you of this lateness. If your child's punctuality does not improve, then a meeting with the attendance officer may be necessary.

When the school day ends the teachers will keep the children with them until 3.20 pm. After this time children are taken to the Main Office where parents will be called, and their child's name will be entered in to the 'Late Collection Book.' If a child is repeatedly picked up late, a phone call will take place from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### **1.5 Absence**

Parents must contact the school when their child is absent to explain that absence. This can be done as follows; by telephone call to 01202 727910 with the following details:

- full name of pupil;
- pupil's Year group or class teacher;
- Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child;
- Reason for absence.

Parents are responsible for contacting the school by telephone, by 8.30 am stating the reason for their child's absence. Parents / guardians must do this on each and every day of absence.

Where a reason for the absence is not received by 9.30 am on the day of the absence, the school will begin contacting parents on the same day to understand the reason for absence. If contact cannot be made or we have reason to feel concerned about an absence, we will ask a member of our pastoral team to make a home visit. This could be for reasons such as unanswered phone calls, concerns about medical needs not being met or if we have reason to suspect absence is due to a holiday that we are not aware of. If there is no answer when we make the visit, we will leave a note informing you that we have been to visit - asking you to contact us as a matter of urgency.

Parents should limit their child's absences to cases of genuine illness and book any holidays outside of term time. No pupil will be permitted to take a holiday during term time. Parents should also make appointments for medical reasons outside of School hours, where possible.

Where further unexplained absences occur, the school will make further contact with the parent (including foster parents and/ or social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding **why** the absence has occurred, and **when** the pupil will return.

The correct absence code will be inputted into the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained. Notification of absences is a legal requirement.

Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. See APPENDIX A Each application will be deliberated individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. If parents wish to apply for leave during term time, they must complete a request form prior to the event. Leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher.

The school follows the guidelines for authorising absence as listed below:-

- Illness,
- emergency medical,
- emergency dental and hospital appointments.

(It is expected that routine check-ups, including hospital review appointments should, as far as possible, be made during holiday periods or after school hours)

- Family bereavements
- Attending a religious observance
- Off-site activities (these fall into two categories, educational visits or individual activities, i.e., exams, sports, performances)
- Exclusion

## **Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance**

This section sets out the measures in place at Avonwood Primary to **promote** regular attendance by its registered pupils.

- How the school is **promoting** and **incentivising** good attendance.
- The school's strategy for using **data** to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- The school's strategy for **reducing persistent and severe absence**, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.
- The point at which **Fixed Penalty Notices** for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g., for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

### **2.1 Promoting and incentivising**

The school will:

- a) Treat all pupils and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
- b) Pupils receive rewards for 100% attendance and punctuality each term. Each week classes are also recognised and rewarded for perfect attendance and punctuality. Classes will receive a certificate for the best attendance that week. We will also recognise those pupils who have the most improved attendance.
- c) In order to have 100% attendance pupils must be in school all day, every day. Children who miss part of the school day for appointments e.g. medical, dental, speech & language would not be achieving 100%, which is why we strongly encourage parents to make appointments outside of the school day.
- d) If a pupil comes to school but is then sent home ill, this would be an authorised illness as the onus is on the school staff recommending that the pupil be sent home for their own wellbeing.
- e) Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels as part of the reporting system every term.
- f) Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- g) Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- h) Make the necessary statutory data returns to the Local Authority.
- i) Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

### **2.2 Data Strategy**

The School understands that as poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early detection is crucial. We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:



- both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils and/ or pupil cohorts that need it.
- look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.
- Praise children who have made a significant improvement in their attendance.

The school will typically carry out the following analysis:

- a) Monitoring and analysing attendance every three weeks, (including punctuality) patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some children on certain days.
- b) Half-termly, termly, and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of pupils and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance.
- c) Benchmarking attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against Trust-level, local, regional, and national data.

We will use this analysis to identify pupils who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those pupils and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning. We will use the data to inform us regarding the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action. We will also provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to school leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).

### **2.3 Absence reduction strategy**

We will devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for specific groups of pupils. This will involve meetings with their adults to identify and remove barriers. Reward charts for individual pupils maybe necessary, alongside the attendance rewards that run across the whole school.

Data and reports will be shared with the Local Governing Body at the end of each term.

As part of promoting regular attendance the school will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

A parent, who has been issued with a penalty notice, must pay up to a maximum of £120 per child within 28 days. The penalty is payable to the Local Authority (details for payment will be contained in the Notice). The amount of the penalty is:

- £60.00 per child per parent, if paid within 28 days of receipt of the Notice
- £120.00 per child per parent, after 28 days, but within 42 days of receipt of the Notice.

Payment of the Penalty Notice cannot be made in instalments. Failure to pay the penalty in full within 28 days of issue, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings

against parents/carer in the Local Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure their child attend school regularly. This may lead to a fine of up to £1,000.00.

Once payment of the penalty notice has been made, parents/carers will no longer be liable for their child's absence from school, during this period to which the notice relates. But, if their child has further periods of unauthorised absence from school, the Local Authority may decide to take parents/carers back to court for a further prosecution.

#### **2.4 Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities**

The school recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil.

That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- a) Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
- b) Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- c) Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, the school will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see the School's SEN policy for further details on SEN support.
- d) Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers pupils may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- e) Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance, recognising that such arrangements can be for a limited time only.
- f) Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the Local Authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the Local Authority. Local Authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see the school's policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions at school for further information.

In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents; and talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their child's attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

## **2.5 Part-time timetables**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interest, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Please note that a part-time timetable cannot be used as a reasonable adjustment for SEND, unless this is on a temporary basis and as advised by an external agency e.g., Educational Psychologist, CAMHS

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it (minimum monthly) with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised and the Local Authority will be informed. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable.

## **2.6 Children Missing/Absent from Education**

The school recognises that children missing/absent from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) later in life.

The school will therefore share information effectively with the Local Authority to ensure all pupils are safe and receiving a suitable education. Any pupils considered to be 'children missing education' will be referred to the Local Authority.

When a pupil leaves outside of the standard transition point, the school will ensure it notifies the Local Authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations. (Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a pupil jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the pupil has left outside of the standard transition point. This will involve contacting all emergency contacts and may involve a home visit from the school if the whereabouts of the child are not confirmed.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil may be removed from the admission register when the school and Local Authority have failed to establish the

whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries. This will then be logged with Children's Social Care as a safeguarding concern.

### **Section 3: Particular Responsibilities**

**This section outlines responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.**

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is Kim Williams, DSL & Attendance officer.
- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on "day 1" will fall to the office admin team.
- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will fall to DSL – Kim Williams or any other member of the safeguarding team.
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are class teacher, year leader, teaching assistant or Mrs Sephton – Pastoral Lead.
- More detailed support on attendance can be requested from SLT, Safeguarding team, or Attendance officer.

### **Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly**

**This section sets out the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend the school regularly.**

Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school supports and works with the family. Wherever possible, we will keep this person consistent.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic the school will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, the school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support.

In the first instance, the school will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. This may include starting a Fast Track to Attendance plan if your child's attendance drops below 90%. This will be a 12-week contract to support you and your child in improving their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we endeavour to work together with all partners to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school, agreeing actions or interventions to address them and keeping those actions under regular review in discussion with families. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. Or where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the Local Authority and other relevant partners, as follows:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.

- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include an inter-agency referral with BCP.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents. This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance and safeguarding and may include the school's point of contact in BCP's Attendance Inclusion Team. The aim of these meetings will be to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.
- Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the school will work with the Local Authority to:
  - Put formal support in place in the form of an education supervision order.
  - Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
  - Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
  - Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, the school will work together with all parties to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

**Section 5: Local Governing Body (LGB) Responsibilities:**

The LGB recognises the importance of school attendance and will:

- promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The LGB will also ensure:

- that the attendance policy and its contents are generally made known within the school and to parents of registered pupils at the school, and
- that steps are taken at least once in every school year to bring the attendance policy to the attention of all those parents and pupils and all persons who work at the school.

Approved by Local Governing Body on Date .....

Implementation Date .....

Review Date.....

## APPENDIX A

### Some examples of exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time.

- Funeral of a parent/carer, grandparent, or sibling – Headteachers will use their discretion having heard from the parent/carer about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence – up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if the headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sports operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA – as appropriate. BCP council school inclusion service can advise schools on individual circumstances if required.
- Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a licence being issued by BCP Council, School Inclusion Service.
- Religious Observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3)(c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs”. This would include Islamic Eid, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions. Headteachers may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time.
- Weddings of parent/carer(s) and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during School holidays; however, there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holiday the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships as it may cause a child further difficulty if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.

### Examples of circumstances NOT considered exceptional: -

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages (e.g., Hajj) these are rare but can result in children being away from School for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional, as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents/carer(s) when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.