

2024 - 2025

Attendance Policy

Audley Infant School



Lisa Johnson – Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator
AUDLEY INFANT SCHOOL 2024 - 2025

Attendance Policy

Philosophy

Good habits which are established early in life, continue into adulthood and help to develop good working routines and relationships, which in turn lead to personal success and self-esteem. Good attendance at school underpins success in all areas of the curriculum.

To enable the pupils at Audley Infant School to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, be at school, on time, every day the school is open except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Attendance **MUST** be given priority in their daily life.

All Pupils should achieve at least 96% attendance with the aim of 100%.

The Policy aims to ensure that a fair and consistent approach is adopted to all matters affecting children and parents/carers in relation to attendance.

The Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Parents must inform the Head Teacher in writing of their intention to elect home school as the child will be removed off school roll.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. Failure to ensure regular attendance without good reason is an offence and may result in a fine or prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Promoting good attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us achieve this we will:

- Promote a culture throughout school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Publish our attendance policy on the school website to ensure the information contained within the policy is accessible to everybody.
- Publish details on attendance on our weekly newsletter.
- Report to you half termly regarding your child's attendance.
- Reward and celebrate good attendance through class competitions and certificates.
- Carry out transition work with pupils moving between nursery and reception and before leaving for junior school.

Roles and Responsibilities for Attendance

Parents

- Ensure children attend every day and arrive on time.
- Contact the school before 09:00am on the 1st day of absence and each day thereafter.
- Provide additional medical evidence when requested by school.
- Avoid any holidays in term time.
- Be available to attend meetings in school as necessary.
- Work together with school and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies, including parenting contracts, EWO, Early Help, CAF's.

Pupils

- Go to bed early so you are ready to learn.
- Attend school every day and on time.
- Complete homework and reading, ask your class teacher if you are struggling.
- Let your class teacher/parents know if you have any worries in school that may affect your attendance.
- Join in any interventions or additional support offered to you by school or other agencies.

Head Teacher – Mrs Nelson

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.
- Implement the Attendance Policy.
- Monitor absence data and report to Governors.
- Issue fixed penalty notices and support legal action if required.

Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator – Mrs Johnson

- First day response – Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and record this information accurately. Text home if no response is received.
- Attend the home address on day 3 if no contact has been established, or there are other safeguarding concerns.
- Regularly communicate with parents regarding pupil attendance and punctuality to ensure good levels of attendance either by phone call, letter or meeting.
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups.
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to attendance and punctuality.
- Consider the use of a Parenting Contract formally known as an Attendance Contract.
- Liaise with the Inclusion Officer and School Nurse and refer where necessary.
- Consider the use of the new Fast Track process in certain circumstances.
- Advise the Head Teacher of any concerns, fixed penalty notices or legal action.

Teachers/TLA's

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment.
- Record attendance in class twice daily through the SIMS system using the appropriate codes.

- Pass on any messages/concerns regarding absence to the Pupil Wellbeing Co-Ordinator.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance. Attendance is the responsibility of all staff.
- Discuss attendance at parents evening for those children where there are attendance concerns.

Governors

- Ensure compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.
- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly.
- Regularly review attendance data for pupil groups, including vulnerable groups, with Senior Leaders and the Attendance Lead
- Support the school with promoting key actions to improve attendance

Child Missing in Education (CME)

Where a pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive days or more without contact, or where the school has good reason to believe the family has moved out of the Blackburn with Darwen area, a CME report will be made to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will advise when the child can be removed from the school roll.

In these circumstances the Local Authority and the school will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

- A. make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details;
- B. check local databases within the local authority;
- C. check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems;
- D. follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
- E. check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;
- F. check with agencies known to be involved with family;
- G. check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known;
- H. check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
- I. check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;
- j. in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and
- K. home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives.

As the parent of a child on a school roll you will be expected to provide school, in advance of you leaving the area/country with the following information:

- New home address.
- Name and address of the school your child will be attending or where a place has been agreed.
- Confirmation from the new school that your child is attending or that a place has been agreed.
- Flight details.

The School Day:

Start Times:

Nursery – 09:00 am – at the nursery door.

Reception – 08:50 am – Reception playground.

Year 1 & Year 2 – 08:45 am – line up in classes on the MUGA.

Some pupils may have different timetables as part of their Individual Education Health Care Plan. These are agreed between school and the parent/carer.

For safeguarding purposes all children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult/sibling **aged 14 or over at all times** until a class teacher/member of staff is present. It is not acceptable to allow your child to walk round/across the carpark on their own regardless of circumstances.

Lateness:

Registers are marked by the class teacher by:

Reception – 08:55 am

Year 1 & 2 – 08:50 am

Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in the classroom by that time.

If your child has 5 late marks recorded in a half term, you will be asked to meet with the class teacher or Mrs Johnson – Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator to resolve the problem, parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they are struggling to get their child to school on time.

If this persistent late record continues to **10 late marks in a half term**, you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to resolve the problem and consider any further action necessary.

School operate a breakfast club for Year 1 & 2 every morning between 08:00am – 08:30am. We do not accept children after 08:30 am. Reception children are able to attend once it is established that they are settled in school.

This is currently free of charge.

Registers close at 09:10 am for Reception and 09:05 am for Year 1/Year 2 in accordance with the Regulations. If your child arrives after this time they will receive a U code, this will show them in school however this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. In this case, you need to bring your child to the main school building, where they will be signed in and taken to their relevant class/nursery.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they miss essential basic skills work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This is distressing for the child who arrives late. It can unsettle their day and therefore their learning.

Finish Times:

Nursery – 12:00 pm – at the nursery door.

Reception – 15:05 pm – Reception playground.

Year 1 & Year 2 – 15:15 pm – on the MUGA. (Where you drop your child in a morning)

Children **must be collected by an adult or sibling aged 14 or over**. Please notify school at the earliest opportunity if you are running late. **You must call school in advance if someone we do not know is collecting your child. We will not release your child to someone who is not on our pupil contact form.**

Telephone Numbers

There are times when the school needs to contact parents/carers for reasons including absence, so the school needs to have parent/carers contact numbers at all times. Please help the school to help parents/carers and children by making sure that the school always has an up to date number – if the school does not, we may be unable to contact you in an emergency. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

By law we need a minimum of two contact numbers for each child.

Understanding Types of Absence

It is **the parent's/carers responsibility** to inform the school if your child is unable to attend school due to illness/sickness or other circumstance. **The school telephone number is 01254 52065.** There is the option to leave a message, please speak clearly and give your child's name, class or the name of your child's teacher, your relationship to the child and the reason for the absence.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the **School** (not by parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like genuine illness, emergencies or other causes that the school feels were unavoidable. For nursery children this is a morning session.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or for which no reason has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- **No contact from parents/carers regarding the absence.**
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, including minor illnesses, coughs, colds and runny noses. Children are allowed to be given **prescribed antibiotics** in school, we ask that you complete the medical consent form and sign them in at the school office at the start and out at the end of each day. Please see the minor illness and attendance guidance on our school website under Parents & Guardians – Useful Information.
- Truancy during the school day.

- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark – U Code.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst pupils may be away from the school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Issues with regular attendance will be resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school, we expect that you contact our Pupil Wellbeing Co-Ordinator, Mrs Johnson, to discuss and resolve this issue.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments

The school expects appointments for routine checks to take place **out of school time**. Where this is not possible you **must** provide proof of the appointment (appointment card, letter, text) in order for the absence to be authorised. Where possible children **must** be in school before and return to school for the remainder of the session following the appointment.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a “**persistent absentee**” when they miss **10%** or more of their schooling across the school year, for **any** reason. Absence at this level results in a considerable loss of learning and damage to any child’s educational prospects. We need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to resolve this. We want to work with you to resolve poor attendance, school and families working together. If attendance remains an issue, then we will need to escalate it to a significant level.

Due to the serious nature of persistent absence, school will always consider requesting support from the Inclusion Officer and the School Nurse in order to address the matter. School may also consider requesting that the Local Authority issue penalty notices or use other sanctions as a means of improving attendance.

No absences will be authorised whilst a pupil is PA (Below 90%) without medical evidence. A referral to the School Nurse will be considered.

Why attendance matters: Over a whole school year, each day represents 2 attendance marks. We have a morning and afternoon register therefore each day at school represents 2 possible attendance marks.

- Less than 5 days’ absence = 98%+ attendance (10 sessions = 25 lessons missed)
- 14 days’ absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance (28 sessions = 70 lessons missed)
- 20 days’ absence (approx.) = 90% attendance (40 sessions = 100 lessons missed)
- 30 days’ absence (approx.) = 88% attendance (60 sessions = 150 lessons missed)

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days, (80 sessions/200 lessons), of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

The Use of Fixed Penalty Notices and Warning Letters

Penalty notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, such as:

- Inappropriate absences that parents have allowed.
- Unapproved leave of absence taken in term-time or delayed return from an authorised leave of absence without obtaining advance permission from the school.
- Persistent late arrival at school after closure of registers.

In every case, a pupil who has missed a minimum of **10 morning or afternoon school sessions, (5 full days in total)**, to unauthorised absence during the current term or **14 school sessions (7 full days in total)**, over **2** consecutive terms will be at risk of being issued with a penalty notice warning.

Warning of a Penalty Notice

A parent/carer may sometimes receive a written warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued. This will give you a period of time to improve his/ her attendance. During this period, the child must have no further unauthorised absences from school. If he/she is ill during that time, medical evidence must be provided.

Audley Infant School will follow Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority's Code of Conduct regarding the issuing of Fixed Penalty/Warning letter.

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but if you receive a formal written warning, you can write or speak to the Local Authority about your situation should you wish.

Penalty notices are issued by post to your home. You **must pay in full** within 21 days of receiving a penalty notice and the fine is **£80**. The fine doubles to **£160** if you pay after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty is not paid by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority can Prosecute the parents.

The legal definition of a parent is contained in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and refers to any adult who is a natural parent, someone with parental responsibility or someone who cares for the child.

Parenting contracts previously known as attendance contracts will also be considered.

School will also consider the use of the Fast Track Process with Blackburn with Darwen Inclusion Team instead of a fixed penalty notice in certain circumstances.

Fast Track to Attendance Pathway Process (6 - 8 weeks)

Fast Track is a time-focussed model of best practice, which concentrates on early intervention in cases of persistent non-attendance. It aims to ensure a fast, effective approach to the implementation of strategies to tackle non-attendance and the underlying causes.

Fast Track involves engaging the parents and specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed timeframe – usually 6- 8 weeks.

Failure to make improvements could lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court and result in a fine of up to £1000.

Requests for Extended Leave/Family Holidays During Term-time

There is No automatic entitlement in law to take leave during term time.

Extended leave in term time is a significant issue for school. Children may not be taken out of school to go on extended family holidays abroad or to visit family abroad. Children's absence from **school significantly disrupts** their learning and undermines educational attainment and

achievement. There are substantial school holidays in which you can travel abroad without disruption to your child's education.

The Government's advice to parents is that **holidays should be taken when the school is closed.**

Changes in Government regulations mean that **from 19 August 2024, Head teachers are no longer able to grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are specific exceptional circumstances, this is at the Head teacher's discretion.**

Examples of exceptional circumstances which justify the Head teacher's approval could include:

- Members of the armed forces who are returning home from active duties.
- Emergency service personnel (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue) who are unable to take leave at certain times of the year.
- The death of an **immediate family member**, e.g. parents or sibling (**this does not include Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents or other extended family**). Leave will not be granted for travel abroad due to sick grandparents or extended family.

In addition, any parental application for leave in exceptional circumstances **must be made in advance by completing the extended leave form** (available from the school office) and the Head teacher must be satisfied the individual circumstances warrant them granting leave. **Retrospective approval will not be given and valid evidence will need to be produced before a Head teacher will approve the leave.**

If leave is granted, it is for the **Head Teacher** to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

When a child is absent from school, valuable teaching and learning time is missed. Whole units of work or topics can be missed and it is very difficult for your child to make up for gaps in their learning. Children struggle with relationships and re-establishing friendships. Your child will feel the impact of any extended leave. Please consider them when making your decision.

Taking a child on holiday without permission will be regarded as unauthorised absence. Parents who do so may be issued with a Penalty Notice by the Local Authority. The fine is £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the Notice. Where a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will normally start legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

A fixed penalty notice will be requested if your child is absent from school for 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 or more days) due to an unauthorised holiday.

Deleting the name of a pupil of compulsory school age:

Where a pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of 20 school days or more and:

- At no point has the absence been authorised by the school (under regulation 6(2)).
- The school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause and
- The school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location but they have not succeeded.

School will work closely with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council reporting absence until the pupil is taken off roll.

Once your child has been deleted off roll, we cannot guarantee a place will be available at Audley Infant School.

Summary

The school has legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly. All members of school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Accepted by AIS Governing Body- Sept 2022

Signed Date.....

H Nelson Headteacher

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

AIS GB