

The venue Infant School


ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted: _____

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body: Mr Stewart Miller

Position: Chair of Governors

Date: 8th February 2024


THE AVENUE INFANT SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

It is important that you and your child develop a positive attitude to school attendance and punctuality so that they do not miss out on the opportunities at school. These qualities of reliability are also important in adult life.

In the short term, irregular school attendance can prevent a child's sense of belonging in the school setting as well as negatively impacting their learning progress. Poor attendance, especially when condoned by parents, disrupts a child's education. This causes a lack of continuity and progression in school work and can establish patterns of behaviour which may lead to long-term truancy.

The Avenue Infant School will work closely with parents and other partners (including NNC Education Inclusion) to ensure this policy is fulfilled.

AIMS

- ~ To emphasise the importance of, and secure from pupils, maximum attendance at school to enable them to take full advantage of their educational opportunities;
- ~ To make explicit to all relevant parties the school's expectations over attendance levels;
- ~ To promote a consistent approach across the school to all matters relating to attendance;
- ~ To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- ~ To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers, pupils) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised";
- ~ To stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.
- ~ To identify ways school can support pupils and parents to remove any barriers to good school attendance.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure the child attends that school regularly. This means that their child must attend every day that the school is open, except 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'.

(Working together to improve school attendance, 2022)

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; put simply: absence means missed learning. It is also a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance leads to pupils missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential.

Attendance is a national priority and all schools have to submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will clearly be scrutinised by OFSTED. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high examination performance.

In line with the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (2022), the school will work with all relevant partners to:

EXPECT – MONITOR – LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND – FACILITATE SUPPORT – FORMALISE SUPPORT - ENFORCE

School attendance is also relevant to the school's safeguarding policy, ensuring pupils attend school regularly and monitoring ensures school procedures respond promptly to non-attendance (without notification) or low attendance rates. Poor school attendance could be an indicator safeguarding concerns.

WHAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE ATTENDANCE RATE?

The importance of school attendance and high expectations are communicated to parents at initial parents information session and this policy will be available to parents on the school website, with an annual reminder leaflet being shared and regular 'headlines' being shared via school communications and social media channels.

OFSTED views 90% as the absolute minimum acceptable attendance rate. The aim is that our pupils achieve over 96% attendance. The Government threshold for persistent absence is below 90%. This means that children will be considered 'persistently absent' if their attendance falls below 90%.

Categorising absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 require schools to determine whether an absence can be deemed to be authorised or whether the child should be regarded as being absent without permission. In the terms of the legislation it is only the school who can approve the absence, not the parent. Here at The Avenue Infant School absence will only be authorised for the following reasons:-

- i. Pupil illness.
- ii. Pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observation by the religious group to which the pupil's parents belong.
- iii. Pupil is participating in an approved public performance or is subject to temporary part-time timetable (in agreement with the school).
- iv. Permission has been granted by the Headteacher through the Absence Request Procedure (see below).
- v. Pupil has a medical or dental appointment, confirmed with an appointment card/letter. The child is expected to attend school prior to the appointment or return to school after the appointment.
Where possible medical or dental appointments should be booked outside of school hours.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- ~ no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carers;
- ~ the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. We will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

We ask parents to make their request to the school well in advance (preferably 4 week's notice) to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. Individual cases will need to be judged on their merits and fine judgements will have, on occasions, to be made.

The DfE guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. A note from home therefore does NOT automatically make an absence valid/justified/authorised.

HOLIDAYS

Changes to legislation in 2013 mean parents are no longer entitled to take their child on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the **headteacher must be satisfied** that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

Parents can be fined by the local authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

HOME / SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. To this end, we ask parents and carers to:

- ~ Do all they can to ensure their child arrives on time for morning and afternoon school. The first lesson begins at 8.50 am and afternoon registration is at 1.00 p.m. Parents can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late. We will monitor persistent late comers and action will be taken.
- ~ If their child is ill, notify the school on the first day with an estimation of the likely length of absence;
- ~ Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school and any barriers to school attendance.

In return the school will:

- ~ Contact home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home;
- ~ Contact home over any unexplained absences.
- ~ Follow up promptly any concerns that parents pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in, school;
- ~ Provide support to remove barriers to school attendance, from within school or external agencies as appropriate;
- ~ Regularly and consistently remind pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- ~ Ensure that parents/carers understand that attendance and punctuality is their responsibility and not their child's. Infant aged children have limited power over their arrival time at school and attendance.
- ~ Reward high class attendance and punctuality in any given week. This must be done in such a way that no pupil will feel responsible for the class not achieving these ticks. Therefore, this must be done with great sensitivity and discretion. This is also shared with parents / carers via newsletters.

- ~ Use rewards for 100% attendance
- ~ Information on the impact of attendance on education will be shared with parents / carers at least annually.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROCEDURES

- ~ Class teachers/ Teaching assistants take the register at the start of each morning and afternoon session.
- ~ The register information is read every morning after registration. It is imperative that the data entered is accurate and that there is a mark for EVERY pupil (everyone must fall into one of the three categories of present, absent or late!). Staff must enter either 'present', 'absent' or 'late'. Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the information we have is as accurate as possible.
 - *The attendance register must be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:*
 - Present / \;*
 - Attending an approved educational activity;*
 - Absent O ;*
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or,*
 - Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)*

(School Attendance guidance 2020-2021)
- ~ We operate a policy of 1st day response regarding absence across the school. The office staff phone parents of any child not registered in lesson 1. (The DfE guidance strongly recommends a policy of same-day contact as this has been shown to be the single most effective strategy in improving rates of attendance; it is also important from a child protection perspective.)
 - *The school office will follow up any absences to:*
 - Ascertain the reason;*
 - Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;*
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,*
 - Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.*

(School Attendance guidance 2020-2021)
- ~ Parents/carers have been asked to ensure that they contact the school as early as possible on the first day of absence to notify us of their child's absence, ideally by 9.30am.
- ~ Standardised letters are sent by the headteacher to remind parents/carers of their responsibility regarding attendance when a child's absence gives cause for concern.
- ~ Admin staff will check registers daily, any uncertainties will be checked with the class teacher before informing the head.
- ~ Children absent for 5 days (unauthorized) will be reported to the head but usually sooner.
- ~ Authorised absence will still necessitate regular contact from parents and this will be initiated by the attendance officer if no contact is made on a daily basis.
- ~ Where there has been authorised absence of more than 5 days the headteacher should seek to make contact with parents / carers

- ~ Attendance trends, including overall attendance rates and for identified groups, persistent absence rates and actions will be reported to governors at each full governors meeting.

CONCERNS ABOUT POOR / IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

- ~ Authorised absences that are odd but regular will be reported to the head.
- ~ Weekly attendance reports will be presented to the headteacher identifying poor weekly attendance (with reasons), any unauthorised absences and actions taken (record of actions), trends of attendance / punctuality for pupils causing concern [Early intervention].
- ~ The attendance co-ordinator, with the authorization of the head, will contact parents / carers in person, by telephone or in writing in the first concerns regarding absence [Targeted]
- ~ Secondly the headteacher may write formally and, if the concern persists, initiate a formal meeting to form an Attendance contract. This meeting will be voluntary but parents / carers will be strongly encouraged to attend.
- ~ At the parental contact meeting a supportive plan to address barriers and improve school attendance / punctuality, will be agreed and signed by the headteacher and parents / carers. This will be reported to Governors.
- ~ Parental contact meetings will be followed up within three months and progress reviewed. If targets have not been met the advice / support of Northamptonshire's Education and Inclusion Partnership. At this point, safeguarding procedures should be considered with reference to Northamptonshire's Thresholds and Pathways document.
- ~ Parent / carer support to reduce absenteeism could be the school's Family Support Worker, an Early Help plan or signposting / referral to other relevant agencies.

LATE ARRIVALS

- ~ A pupil should only be marked as late when the teacher has completed the whole register and a pupil arrives after the register has been sent to the office.
- ~ It is important that we are consistent in our procedures across the school: parents with siblings in the school do sometimes cross-check to see that the same standards are being applied and, we are consistent in our approach to latecomers. Lates and minutes late are recorded accurately.
- ~ Admin staff will check registers weekly and reported to the head on a weekly basis
- ~ The headteacher / attendance officer will contact parents in person, by telephone or in writing in the first incidence
- ~ Secondly the headteacher may write formally to parent /carer reminding them of their responsibility to ensure their child attends school each day and on time (before registers close), in line with the Home-School Agreement.

- ~ Persistent / regular poor punctuality will result in parents / carers being invited to an Attendance contract meeting with the headteacher. This meeting will be voluntary but parents / carers will be strongly encouraged to attend.
- ~ Finally this will be reported to Governors.

LATE COLLECTION PROCEDURE

All children need to be collected by 3.15, the end of the school day.

If for any reason parents/carers are late collecting their child or someone else is coming to collect them the school must be informed.

All children collected late will be recorded.

After 15 minutes children not collected will be brought to Reception and a telephone call will be made to the Home Contact, followed, if no response, by the Emergency Contact.

The school understands that unexpected events may occur which result in late collection, as one-off, but where this is repeated or becomes more regular, when pupils have not been collected on time, after 15 minutes they will be transferred to the care of the school's After School Club. This will then be charged at the After School Club late collection rates.

If after 60 minutes children remain on site, Children's Social Care will be contacted, unless the school has received a genuine explanation.

All late collections of over 15 minutes will need to be reported to the Governors.

THE EDUCATION INCLUSION AND PARTNERSHIP TEAM (EIPT)

The school will contact EIPT regarding pupils who are giving cause for concern; advice / support can be sought via referrals.

The Education Entitlement Service also initiates legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their responsibility of getting their child to school. Before a case goes to court Parenting Contracts will be drawn up setting targets for attendance levels; there may also be formal interviews which could lead to a penalty notice or Court summons. The prime aim of all action is to get the child attending school on a regular basis.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

[Tracking children \(and their families\) who have gone missing from education | North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](http://northnorthants.gov.uk)

Definition:

All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision) e.g. we don't know where they are.

Identification

Children and young people who are missing from education are identified in one of two ways:

Within Northamptonshire;

Notification is received from an individual school, team or agency to North Northants's Educational Inclusion and Partnerships Team (EIPT) after the child has been missing from Education for 10 days.

Referrals from schools to EIPT: It is expected that schools will have tried home visits, phone calls (dates and times will be required when submitting referral) to all available numbers /email addresses /asked pupils /others with knowledge of family before referring via EIPT contact form as a CME (EIPT contact form can be found on www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/ees) . If the young person's destination is known in another area, school are to follow up with other authority.

External to Northamptonshire;

Notification is received from an individual, Other Local Authority (OLA) School, OLA CME Team, OLA Team or OLA agency directly to CME team through email or telephone call.

The CME officer checks a report, each term, identifying children and young people who have been removed from a school roll and do not have a destination and current educational placement

Missing Persons

These are young persons that have been reported to the police. The police recording definitions are:

Missing – whereabouts cannot be established, circumstances out of character, context suggests person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm or harming others.

Absent – a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

A Senior Inclusion Officer attends the Missing Person and Child Sexual Exploitation Forum as the Local Authority's education link once a month, to advise on education and look into those cases where education may be an issue.

The EIPT receives daily police young missing persons and Domestic Abuse reports and will contact schools to make them aware that a child has been reported missing or absent. This is to assist them in supporting the child. This information is then recorded on Capita ONE.

End dating and putting on roll procedures

- Schools have an essential role in identifying and preventing children from going missing from education.
- Schools can only end date a pupil from their roll in circumstances that comply with Regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- In addition schools must also follow Regulation 5 in relation to the placing of children on a school roll. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publication/s/eOrderingDownload/UKSI-20061751.pdf>
- EIPT and Admissions have jointly produced procedures for placing a student on roll and removing them from roll. These procedures are intended to assist schools in fulfilling their duties in relation to the 2006 regulations <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/educationandlearning/services/attendance/pages/placing-children-on-roll-and-end-dating-procedures.aspx> (Northamptonshire website search - roll)
- There are significant Child Protection implications when the whereabouts of a child is not known and we would therefore ask all schools to follow these procedures
- If you are unsure contact EIPT - www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/ees

School's safeguarding responsibilities

If a pupil fails to attend or turn up on day one follow the guidelines below and keep records of your attempts to track down the family and child for safeguarding purposes.

- Within the first day of non-attendance, a telephone call to the home address must be made, or if there is no telephone number available then an email/letter must be sent to the home address. Where risk assessment considers it necessary the school may choose to make a home visit on day one.
- On day two; a subsequent telephone call must be made either from the school landline or preferably a mobile phone.
- On day three; follow up with a letter (second one in some cases) to the home address in plain English, asking for contact to be made with the school immediately. Please give the parents/carers 3 working

days to make contact and if you are aware that English may not be the parent's first language, copy the letter into a language that may be more accessible.

- Week two; arrange a visit to the home address ensuring that risk assessments are in place.
- Week two; if the child has not been seen and the parents/carers have not made contact either, schools must contact the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team to alert them that they have a child missing from school

It is the responsibility of all schools to ensure that checks are carried out and the relevant professionals are alerted if a child is not accessing full time education, or is unable to be contacted.

See Appendix 3

Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE CODES- From Sept 2022

From [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

PRESENT	
/ \	Present in school/=am, \= pm
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
ABSENT- Authorised absence from school	
C	Leave of absence granted by school (e.g. for participation in a performance or being subject to a temporary part-time timetable)
H	Leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by school
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental)
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
ABSENT- Unauthorised absence from school	
G	Holiday not granted by school or in excess of the period granted by school
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
ATTENDING AN APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY	
D	Dual registered at another school
ATTENDING AN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY THAT TAKES PLACE OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL	
B	Off-site educational Activity
J	An interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
UNABLE TO ATTEND DUE TO EXPECTAIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
ADMINISTRATIVE CODES	
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

APPENDIX 2

LETTER TO GO OUT WITH LEAVE OF ABSENCE RESPONSE FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE



The Avenue Infant School

Developing deep roots to grow the strongest trees.

Head teacher Mrs. Helen Morrall
Acting Deputy Head Miss Emma Cotter
Business Manager Mrs. Allison Munns
Bursar Mrs Denise Cable

Chair of Governors Mr Stewart Miller
Vice Chair Mr Robert Ballard
Family Support Worker Nina Fowle

The Avenue, Wellingborough
Northamptonshire, NN8 4ET

Telephone No 01933 276366
Fax No 01933 224414

Email address: head@theavenue-inf.northants-ecl.gov.uk

Date: _____

To the parent/carer of: _____

Dear parent / carer,

I have received your leave of absence request form. This the absence will be coded as **unauthorised** as it is believed to be for the purposes of a leave of absence without exceptional circumstance.

As detailed on the request for leave form, head teachers are only able to authorise term time absence in a very few circumstances deemed to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

I must inform you that should you continue with this unauthorised absence this could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued by the local authority.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Morrall

Head teacher

APPENDIX 3 – CME RISK ASSESSMENT AND CHECKLIST

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (from NCC guidance August 2020)



Safeguarding Children Missing Education Process for Schools

Day One: The school identifies that a child is not in school. A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer that the child is safe at home.

Result of Call	Action
There is no answer at the home or on mobile numbers	Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is safe with them	Ask for reason for absence and record
The person answering is not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe	The school's designated lead for child protection should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned	School to advise the parent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing • Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searing for the child • Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment • Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing

If the judgement on Day One is that there is reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm the school will contact Police and/or children's social care immediately.

If the judgement on Day One is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm school continues to make enquiries and informs Education Inclusion & Partnership on Day Ten that the child is missing education .

School Risk Assessment for Child Missing Education

Assessing vulnerability requires a combination of professional knowledge and experience of child welfare issues and knowledge of local circumstances. Considering the following questions could assist the process. If in doubt always consult with managers or other services.

Criteria	Risk	Action
Is there good reason to believe that the child may be the victim of crime?	High	Inform Police and/or children's social care immediately
Does the child have a formal child protection plan?	High	
Is the child in care i.e. looked after by the local authority?	High	
Is the planned or current LA children's social care or LA adults' social care services involved? e.g. section 47 enquiry about to start	High	
Is there a person present in or visiting the family who poses an on-going risk to children, or who is suspected of previously harming a child?	High	
Is the child at risk of sexual exploitation?	High	
Is the child at risk of radicalisation?	High	
Has there been LA children's social care or LA adults/ social care or Criminal Justice System involvement in the past?	Medium	<p>Give consideration to the vulnerability of the child and following risk assessment inform one or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Safer School Officer • Children's Social Care • Local Authority Designated Officer • Education Welfare Service • School Nurse <p>Use other services to help with your risk assessment, including the above.</p>
Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g. FMG or forced marriage.	Medium	
Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?	Medium	
Is there any known history of domestic violence?	Medium	
Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?	Medium	
Was there any significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?	Medium	
Has the child been a victim of bullying?	Medium	
Does the child need essential medical or health care?	Medium	
Was the child noted to be depressed prior to the child's unexplained absence?	Medium	
Has the child gone missing with their family?	Medium	
Have the parents been subject to proceedings in relation to attendance?	Medium	
Is there a history or poor attendance?	Medium	
Has there been any change in the child/family's financial circumstances?	Medium	
Age of the child	Medium	

APPENDIX 4

LETTER TO PARENTS AFTER HOME VISIT FOR NON-ATTENDANCE WITHOUT NOTIFICATION



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Developing deep roots to grow the strongest trees.

Head teacher Mrs. Helen Morrall
Acting Deputy Head Miss Emma Cotter
Business Manager Mrs. Allison Munns
Bursar Mrs Denise Cable

Chair of Governors Mr Stewart Miller
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The Avenue, Wellingborough
Northamptonshire, NN8 4ET

Telephone No 01933 276366
Fax No 01933 224414

Email address: head@theavenue-inf.northants-ecl.gov.uk

Date: _____

To the parent/carer of: _____

Dear parent/carer

Your child has been recorded as being absent from school, with no notification from you as to the reasons for this.

As per the School Agreement that you signed, we require parents/carers to inform us of their child's absence by 9.30am on the day. If this does not occur we are obligated to seek clarification from yourselves via a telephone call to you; failing a response, a home visit will take place.

Today we have made a home visit as we have had no notification as to the reasons for their absence from school for _____ day/s.

Once you are in receipt of this letter please contact us as a matter of urgency to let us know the reasons for your child's absence and when we can expect to welcome them back to school.

Yours sincerely

MRS HELEN MORRALL
HEAD TEACHER

cc. File copy

APPENDIX 6- ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN FOR PARENTAL CONTACT MEETING



INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN

NAME		CLASS		TERM	
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CURRENT % ATTENDANCE	NUMBER OF LATES	ATTENDANCE TARGET	POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE	
		95% (with no lates)	SESSIONS MISSED	
			PRESENT	

REASONS FOR ABSENCE	
REASONS FOR LATE ARRIVALS	
SUGGESTED ACTIONS / STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE PUNCTUALITY	
REASONS FOR IMPROVED ATTENDANCE	
HELP NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY & PUPIL TO REACH TARGETS	

Date of next meeting:.....

Signed..... Headteacher

.....Parent

.....Parent