



Children's



Endeavour



Trust

# Abbot's Hall Primary School Attendance Policy

The Children's Endeavour Trust comprises:

Abbot's Hall Community Primary School

Bosmere Community Primary School

Broke Hall Community Primary School

Chilton Community Primary School

Combs Ford Primary School

Freeman Community Primary School

Springfield Junior School

Whitehouse Community Primary School

## Document Control

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## **Introduction**

Our school is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance by all. Only by attending school regularly, and punctually, will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

Our school recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all pupils registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the whole school community -pupils, parents/carers, tutors, teachers, support staff and Governors work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at school miss just over 4 half-terms of learning or 19 full school days in each year.

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

## **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, Parents/carers and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Support the safeguarding of all children and families ensuring that pupils are in school.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.

- Improve pupil's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve full attendance for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school and the community by raising the awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a pupil's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and staff, so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers and our attendance officer, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents/carers understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their pupil attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping pupils with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance by identifying barriers to school and developing strategies to overcome these.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## **Definitions**

### **1.1.1 Authorised absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, unavoidable medical/dental appointments which should be these after school.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. Where the absences are not authorised, we will inform parents/carers of this.

### 1.1.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the school. (Unauthorised holiday constitutes an unauthorised absence.)
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent
- A fixed penalty notice fine will be issued when 7 or more unauthorised absence sessions (not necessarily consecutively) have occurred (3.5 whole days in total). In this case, a pupil's attendance is deemed as 'not regular' in line with the Local Authority's protocol for Fixed Penalty Notices.
- A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent/carer of each pupil taken out of school and that this carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid within 28 days if the fine is not paid on time, it may result in legal action being taken against parents/carers. **Parents/carers have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Legal action under Section 444(1) can result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months imprisonment.**

Further information on avoidable absences and the Law can be found in Appendix A.

### Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Record attendance twice daily and consistently record absence or lateness
- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time
- Work with parents/carers and other agencies to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- Refer to the Trust Educational Welfare Officer any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve
- Report attendance statistics to the LA and the DfE where requested

### Responsibilities

All members of our school community have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

**Parents/Carers:**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter/prescription paperwork or packet.)
- As far as possible ensure that non-urgent medical or dental appointments are made outside of the school day or avoiding registration periods.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time - only if absolutely necessary - as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the class teacher at the school as soon as possible about any pupil's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Promote the link between attendance and attainment/progress.

**Pupils**

Pupils are responsible for:

- To aim for high attendance
- To be on time for school
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.
- Take pride in attendance and punctuality.

**Class Teachers**

Class teachers/tutors are responsible for:

- Welcoming pupils at the beginning of the day and for each lesson.
- Celebrating high attendance rates – both verbally and through the school's rewards system.
- Class teachers/tutors are the child's first point of contact and will monitor daily attendance
- Take registers accurately and on time
- Highlighting concerns regarding attendance with parents/carers and or pupils
- Discussing attendance during parent's/carer's evenings or at individual parent/carer meetings
- Raising concerns with the schools where necessary

**Senior Leadership Team**

- Monitor attendance and where concerns are identified, consult with parents/carers outside agencies to agree actions to address identified issues
- Inform local Committees/Governors of attendance data through reports

- Inform parents/carers of attendance for their pupils in line with the school's reporting procedures
- Promote excellent attendance by pupils and provide opportunities to celebrate good attendance
- Monitor the attendance of individual cohorts of children and plan appropriate interventions at whole group level to address concerns.

#### **Headteachers (or member of senior staff with responsibility for attendance).**

- Consider requests for absence and meet with parents/carers to discuss such requests as necessary
- Make referrals to the Local Authority for the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices as appropriate
- Monitor the progress of attendance interventions across key groups to ensure all pupils have the best opportunity for success.

#### **Schools will oversee**

- *Overall monitoring of school attendance*
- *Identify trends in authorised and unauthorised absence*
- *Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues*
- *Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised*
- *Making referrals to other agencies as appropriate*
- *Meeting parents/carers in danger of being issued a first warning*
- *Liaise with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence*
- *Keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher*
- *Inform the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them*
- *Provide background information to support referrals*
- *Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns*
- *Follow up absences with immediate requests for explanation via telephone calls or e-mail*
- *Ensure attendance issues are raised by teachers at parent/carer consultation evenings where necessary*
- *Collate and record registration and attendance information*
- *Take and record messages from parents/carers regarding absence*
- *Contact parents/carers of absent children where no reason for absence received*
- *Record details of pupils who arrive late or go home*
- *Send out standard letters regarding attendance.*

The Attendance Officer has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor Management of Information System. Regular meetings are held with the Trust Educational Welfare Officer to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents/carers or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns.

### **Local Governing Body and Trust Board**

- Attendance data and strategies for attendance support will be shared with Local Governing Body and Trust Board during meetings enabling Governors/Trustees to offer challenge and support.
- A named Governor for attendance will maintain an overview of policies and procedures in relation to attendance.

### **Registration**

The school's hours are shown in the table below. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 8.50am and 1.00pm (using attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present.)

<b>Event</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>
<b>The school opens at:</b>	<b>8.45am</b>	<b>8.45am</b>	<b>8.45am</b>
<b>The morning register is called at:</b>	<b>8.50am</b>	<b>8.50am</b>	<b>8.50am</b>
<b>A pupil will get a late mark after:</b>	<b>8.50am</b>	<b>8.50am</b>	<b>8.50am</b>
<b>A pupil will get an unauthorised absence after:</b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<b>9.00am</b>
<b>The afternoon register is called at:</b>	<b>1.00pm</b>	<b>1.00pm</b>	<b>1.15pm</b>
<b>A pupil will get a late mark after:</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>A pupil will get an unauthorised absence after:</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>



All attendance records are documented using Arbor Management of Information System. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept securely and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

## **Lateness**

Any pupil who comes into school after 8.50am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.00am (15 minutes after start time) will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Pupils who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (attendance code M). Where possible routine dentist or doctor's appointments should be made outside of the school day.

Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness:

- The school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer to create an action plan to improve punctuality. Should punctuality not improve the Local Authority may be instructed to give consideration for a fixed penalty notice.

## **Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with full details of the reason for their absence. Please avoid using phrases such as "just not feeling well", "poorly" or "sick".

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for their child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher/Senior Leader responsible for attendance has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence within 5 days the absence is recorded as unauthorised (attendance code O) in line with Department for Education Guidance.

### **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school parents/carers should contact the school either by phone or in writing or by a personal visit to the school office before 10.00am. Where we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then the school will telephone home daily. If no response is received, other contacts held for the child will also be contacted. If we have not heard from any contacts, then a home visit may be conducted.

If no response is received to this home visit the child is referred to the Local Authority as a possible Child Missing Education. Contact may also be made with Children's Services and/or the police in line with safeguarding procedures.

### **Illness**

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a pupil has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents/carers to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from parents/carers for the school to make their own enquiries.

### **Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday**

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of the Headteacher to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year. Instead, the Headteacher will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied that ***exceptional circumstances*** exist.

**Should parents/carers be considering a holiday during term time a leave of absence request form must be completed by all adults with parental responsibility BEFORE the holiday is booked.** Where a holiday is not authorised, consideration will be given to requesting a penalty notice from the Local Authority for this period of absence if a child's attendance is deemed as 'not regular'.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Suffolk County Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects full attendance of pupils.

It is important for pupils to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Local Governing Body to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Parents/carers should ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents/carers are always informed.

Concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via texts/letters and phone calls home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period the following process will take place

- 95% letter to inform parents/carers of attendance
- 92% if no improvement following the 95% letter
- Parents/carers to attend meeting to discuss attendance
- Attendance action plan with parents/carers (4 weeks)
- Review action plan
- No improvement legal interventions

Fixed penalty notices will be issued in line with the Local Authority protocol for unauthorised absence, which will include unauthorised holiday requests, unauthorised lates and unauthorised absence

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and if they fail to do so, may commit an offence under Sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act 1996.

### **Monitoring and Review Attendance within school**

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- A recording and reporting system is in place and is maintained;
- Attendance statistics, strategies and impacts are reported to the Senior Leadership Team and to the Trust,

The Local Governing Body receives monitoring reports on attendance and the implementation and effectiveness of this policy via the Headteacher's report and other attendance specific reports.

The effectiveness of the policy will be measured by the overall rates of pupil attendance and the numbers of pupils falling into the Persistent Absence category. This data will be shared with the Trust to improve our aspirations for our communities

The Attendance policy will be reviewed by the Trust Educational Welfare Officer and the CEO every 2 years.

## **Appendix A: Absence and the Law**

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

WARNING: If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent per child or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996. As a parent/carers, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

\*Penalty notice £60 if paid within 21 days increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days.

<b>AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM TIME</b>	
<b>The Facts</b>	<b>The Law</b>
<p>School aged pupils are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc.) the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p>	<p>The law allows the school to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However, before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are <b>exceptional circumstances</b> which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient evidence/information in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from the parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away for a period of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006</p>

<p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and you may receive a £60* fine per parent per child if your child's attendance is deemed to be 'not regular', falling below the threshold of 96%.</p>	<p>In case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>
<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised. Examples include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genuine illness</li> <li>• Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible).</li> <li>• Days of religious observance.</li> <li>• Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>• External examinations</li> </ul> <p>When traveller children are on the road with their parents/carers for work purposes</p>	<p><b>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any type of shopping</li> <li>• Looking after siblings or unwell parents/carers</li> <li>• Minding the house</li> <li>• Birthdays</li> <li>• Resting after a late night</li> <li>• Relatives visiting or visiting relatives.</li> </ul> <p>Parental appointments</p>
<p>Please contact the Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.</p> <p><b>The law requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive an efficient full-time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.</b></p> <p>We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p>	

## **Appendix B:**

### **Exceptional Circumstance Leave Request Notice to Parents/Carers**

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider that a holiday will be educational, but your child will miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive during your holiday. Attendance is vital to academic success and lost education poses a potential risk of underachievement. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

The Department for Education no longer allows Headteachers to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you consider that your request for absence is exceptional you will need to complete the form attached to this notification. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If leave is not authorised and you nevertheless withdraw your child from school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Suffolk County Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural Parents/carers, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

All requests must be completed on this form; letters will not be accepted. This form should be returned to the Attendance Office at least 15 school days before the start of the absence.

I hope you will support our efforts in raising attendance and attainment at our school

## **Appendix C:**

### **Application by parent/carers for pupil absence**

(to be completed by each parent/carers)

If you consider an absence during term time to be an exceptional circumstance, please complete this form and return it to the Attendance Office **at least 15 school days** before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

**Pupil Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year and class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address:**

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**Post Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent/Carer completing this form:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First day of absence:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of return to school:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If leaving your home address before the first day of absence, please provide the date on which you will leave** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total number of days missed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **days** **Reason for absence:**

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*I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the school may request that Suffolk County Council issue a Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty Notice is issued to each liable parent/carers of each child taken out of school and that this carries a fine of £60 if paid*



within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid within 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay the fine, it may result in legal action being taken against me. **I understand that parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) and Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.**

**Please inform us if you have a child in another local school – we will need to contact the school to discuss the absence request. Please note, we will need to share information about your child with the other school.**

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please ensure you give at least 15 school days' notice of the proposed absence)

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**Below to be completed by the school:**

FAO – School Head

% Current	% Last Year	Comments

Pupil Name: ..... Tutor:  
..... Year: .....

☐ **AUTHORISED:**

Request has been authorised for the following dates **only**:

\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

☐ **UNAUTHORISED:**

**Signed** ..... **School Head** **Date** \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

—

Letter sent / Phone Call / other	Signed: _____	Date: _____
Action: PN Request	Signed: _____	Date: _____