



Abbots Ripton Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Together with God's help we: Grow in Faith, Learn for Life and Achieve our best

Introduction

We are proud of our excellent levels of attendance and actively encourage punctuality and regular attendance so that all children are able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The law expects children to be in school and on time every day. There is no right to take your child out of school and the expectation is that children will be in school every day unless they are too ill to attend or you have permission from the school not to attend.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to achieve their potential. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's attainment in school, relationships with other children, and their ability to form lasting friendships and their confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Rights and Responsibilities

Achieving regular attendance and punctuality is a partnership between home and school. The school will monitor attendance for all children and will work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their son or daughter is punctual and attends school every day of the academic calendar. Our academic calendar is published on our school website.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that 'parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance to school or otherwise'. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

In line with 2018 DfE statutory guidance on attendance, holidays in term time will not be authorised. Permission should be sought from the Head teacher if you feel that you have to take your child out of school during term time. This should be done in advance and only in 'exceptional circumstances'. This is at the Head teacher's discretion and consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before any decisions are made.

Responsibility of Parents / Carers:

Throughout this policy the term 'parents' represents one parent, both parents, and/or carer(s) with whom the child resides.

- Parents have a responsibility to ensure their child/children attend school every day that they are healthy and able to do so, as they have a legal obligation to ensure their child receives a full time education.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child is on time for school for registration which is taken at 8:50am.
If a child is late his/her parent should report directly to the office where they are asked to register their child and record the reason for the late arrival.
- There will be times when your son or daughter cannot attend school most obviously, when they are ill. Parents have a responsibility to contact the school as soon as possible, on the first morning of absence. This is to be done initially by

telephone. This absence will be authorised by the school as long as the reasons are valid and you are able to provide evidence if requested.

- Parents are expected to avoid booking family holidays during term-time. If you intend to take your child out during school time please request a leave of absence at least two weeks in advance. (Forms can be obtained from the school office and downloaded from the school website. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school and leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. In making this decision, a number of factors will be considered relevant to the child at question.

Parents should make all medical / dental appointments, whenever possible, outside of school hours.

Responsibility of the School:

The school has a responsibility to keep registers up to date. Every half-day absence* has to be classified by the school as authorised or unauthorised. Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.

Please see below for those absences classified as authorised and unauthorised.

*Each am and pm registration count as one session each, or a whole day absent will reflect two absent sessions.

- The school will keep parents up to date on their child's attendance, and will issue a letter to initiate the 'staged approach' to improving attendance where a child's attendance causes concern. Parents should expect this when their child's attendance falls below 90% over a rolling 6 week period.
- We will support families where there are challenges with maintaining good attendance.

Our 'staged' approach to improving attendance

Stage 1 – Parents will receive a letter to notify them that the school are concerned by their child's attendance.

Stage 2 – Attendance will continue to be monitored and if no satisfactory improvement is made, Letter 2 will be issued. Letter 2 will inform the parents of a meeting which they are required to attend, in which an 'Attendance Improvement Meeting' Record will be completed and a set-monitoring period set up. This period will be 6 weeks.

Stage 3 – If this agreement is not effective and attendance does not improve, Letter 3 (Penalty Notice) will be sent.

We take Persistent Absence seriously. The law deems a child to be 'persistently absent' if their attendance falls below 90%. Much of the learning pupils miss when they are absent from school will never be made up. These pupils will be at a considerable disadvantage and there is clear evidence of a direct link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Parents and Carers put themselves in the position of being issued with a Penalty Notice if their child is deemed to be persistently absent without reasonable explanation.

Absences that are acceptable to authorise include:

If a child is ill

Parents/carers must inform us on the first day of absence by telephone (01487 773318) and every day thereafter if a pupil is still unable to attend.

If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last episode of sickness. This in line with NHS guidelines to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults in the school.

If illness extends for more than 5 days, parents may then be asked for medical evidence.

If a student has a medical/dental appointments

Please arrange appointments during holidays or out of school hours. Understandably, there may be times when this is not possible, please inform the school office in advance of the appointment and provide appointment letters or slips as supporting evidence. This absence cannot be authorised without this evidence.

If there is a close family bereavement

Please let us know as soon as possible if there is a family bereavement. We want to make sure that we treat children sensitively and ensure they are appropriately supported if/when they are experiencing difficulties.

If they belong to a religious body which sets aside days for religious observance

Please let us know in advance if this is the case and which days for your son/ daughter will be involved.

Unauthorised Absence

Any absence which has not been authorised is recorded as unauthorised. The school has a duty of care to follow up on unauthorised absence and therefore will contact parents/carers to investigate the cause.

- You will be contacted by phone, the morning of the absence if there has been no communication from you.
- After 3 days of absence without adequate explanation, or earlier in the case of a persistent absentee (attendance below 90%), the reasons behind the absence will be investigated by school and potentially referred to the LAO (Local Authority Attendance Officer). If we are concerned about a child's welfare we will not wait 3 days to take action such as visiting the home.
- Parents of persistently absent students will be alerted through our staged approach letters and as a condition of this will be expected to attend a meeting to resolve problems of attendance and agree a support agreement.
- Legal action may be taken if persistent problems cannot be resolved.

Any unauthorised leave of absence over a certain period could result in a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child being issued by the local authority. This money does not come to school. When a referral is made, the referral goes to a legal panel to decide whether a penalty notice should be issued.

Arrival and Registration

Children may arrive any time from 8:40am for a prompt 8:50am start to the school day.

The register is taken twice a day and each day is comprised of two sessions (am registration and pm registration).

Arrival after 8:50am will be marked as late (L) on the register.

Arrival after 9am will be marked as an unauthorised late mark, which is considered as an unauthorised absence for the morning session as registers have closed. A parent will need to sign their child in at the office.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance / Punctuality:

These include:

- Regularly communicating with parents/carers on attendance matters through the newsletter, via special media, on the website and through individual letters.
- Provision of clear information on the school website.
- Sending LA leaflets to all new parents/carers.
- Reporting to the Governing Body via the Head's Report.
- Reinforcing the importance and value of regular attendance to children.
- Reintegrating pupils who have been absent for any extended periods of time through a structured and tailored programme.
- Raising awareness of this attendance policy.
- Ensuring regular communication via email (if necessary) reiterates the importance of attendance.
- Using our staged approach.