

# AYCLIFFE DRIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Updated September 2021  
To be reviewed September 2022**

### **Staff Responsible**

Mrs R M H Green  
Strategy Governors  
Miss T Robson

## **Introduction**

**At Aycliffe Drive Primary School, we want the whole community to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. Good attendance enables pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and reach their full potential. We believe that no child should be disadvantaged by low attendance.**

## **Responsibilities**

All members of school staff 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.

### **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Informing the Senior Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

### **Head teacher**

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.

### **Administration staff**

Administration staffs are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping 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 Head teacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's AIO
- 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.

- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

## **Parents**

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)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## **Expectations**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of the school
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify school of their child absent. This should be done as soon as possible on the first day of absence by calling the school office. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns to school.
- Provide an explanation for lateness
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- avoid booking holidays during term time. Inform relatives and friends of the school's attendance policy so that no unexpected holidays are arranged during term time

**Pupils are expected to:**

- attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually;
- be ready to learn;
- hand in any letters giving reasons for absences to the school office or class teacher.

**The school will:**

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. Aycliffe Drive will recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications and also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come into school.
- Produce a school attendance policy which is consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents, pupils and staff
- provide a safe learning environment;
- maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis;
- follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality;
- keep parents / carers informed of their child's attendance and punctuality record;
- work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern.

**Staff Responsible for Attendance Matters**

- Mrs Green (Head teacher)
- Miss Robson (School Business Manager))
- Mrs Hills (Attendance Manager)
- Governing Body

**Attendance Registers**

The school will take attendance registers at the start of each session and record whether the pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

**Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absences can be authorised in certain circumstances by the Head teacher.

**Absence is unauthorised if:**

- no explanation is forthcoming;

- the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory and does not meet criteria for authorisation;
- lateness is persistent;
- there are concerns about a child's level of attendance or rate of progress;
- holidays are taken in term time.

### **Registration and Lateness**

- Registers are taken at 8.55am and 1.15pm and marked in accordance with DfE guidance.
- Any child arriving after 9.00am or returning after 1.15pm is recorded as 'late before registers close.'
- Morning registers close at 9.15am. Any child arriving after that will be recorded as 'late after registers close' and is marked as absent for the whole of the session.
- Any child who is late will sign in at the school office. Parents/carers will be expected to give a reason for lateness and sign the late book.
- Letters will be sent to parents if a child is persistently late and this will be closely monitored by the Leadership Team.
- Parents / carers whose children are regularly late for school, may be contacted by the Leadership Team who will work with them to bring about an improvement in punctuality.
- If registers are to be kept open due to unforeseen circumstances, parents will be informed on the school website.

### **Register Symbols (printed on registers)**

I	Illness, unfit for School
L	Late, prior to 9.15 am
U	Late after registers have closed (9.15 am)
H	Authorised leave of Absence
G	Unauthorised leave of Absence
M	Medical/dental/hospital
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day of religious observance in the religious body to which the parent/carers belong
V	Educational visit
E	Formally excluded
B	Receiving education at an off-site unit
J	Interview e.g. Secondary School
C	Other circumstances (to be specified)
Y	Enforced closure e.g. snow
X	Non-compulsory school age absence e.g. agreed mornings only
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any code e.g. AIO instruction)

## **If a Child is Absent (See Appendix 1 – First Response)**

- The school will record notification of absence by telephone.
- If notification is not received by 9.30am, the office will telephone parents/carers and record the outcome of the call.
- If notification is still not received, the office will telephone parents/carers again by 10.30am and record the outcome of the call.
- If unable to get a response, the office will inform the Leadership Team.
- A log of 'First Response' will be kept on the pupil's attendance record.
- Written notification from parents/carers will be kept on file.
- Parents/carers will be informed in writing if a child's attendance falls below 94%. See Appendix 2 for example letter.
- Parents/carers will be informed in writing if a child's absence falls below 92% requesting medical evidence for all absence until attendance reaches 95%. See Appendix 3 for example letter.
- Parents/carers will be written to requesting a reason for absence if it has not been provided.
- Any absences will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised according to current DfE guidelines.

## **Illness**

- When children 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 school work.
- 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 child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents 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 you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## **Covid -19 Attendance expectations (updated by the DfE 26.7.21)**

School attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

## **Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19**

This category must be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19.

The schools COVID-19 operational guidance sets out when pupils should self-isolate and when they ought to be tested in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

[Gov.UK: Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#)

### **Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19' could apply**

In line with current legislation, and guidance from PHE (and its successor the UKHSA) and DHSC, examples are as follows.

#### **Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed COVID-19**

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness). Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

#### **Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19**

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

#### **Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, Aycliffe Drive Primary School should use code X in the register.

#### **Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable when shielding is advised**

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

If shielding is advised nationally or in a local area again, by DHSC, PHE or UKHSA, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from DHSC, PHE or UKHSA should be recorded as code X.

## **Pupils who are self-isolating but who have not had a PCR test**

In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and schools should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the pupil as code X in the register.

Aycliffe Drive Primary School will follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Aycliffe Drive Primary School can request supporting evidence from the family. Where Aycliffe Drive Primary School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the school attendance: guidance for schools.

[Gov.UK: School attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## **Remote education**

If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, Aycliffe Drive Primary School will offer them access to remote education.

## **Absence due to Medical Appointments**

- The school will not penalise children for their attendance record if their absences are related to their medical condition, including hospital appointments.
- If a medical appointment is known in advance parents/carers **must notify the school in writing and provide medical evidence**.  
If an emergency appointment is made parents / carers must inform the school before 9am.
- Notification must be given if a child needs to leave school during the day. The relevant book must be signed at the office and again on return.

## **Religious Observance**

Aycliffe Drive Primary school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British Society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorising absence or special leave for religious observance. Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

It is reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance or festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request that a penalty notice is issued.

## **Persistent Absenteeism**

A pupil is classed as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages any child's educational potential and we will try to work with parents/carers to improve attendance rates quickly. Persistent Absentees are monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All persistent absentees are automatically made known to the Attendance Improvement Officer. Regular letters will be sent to parents, including copies of Registration Certificates. See Appendix 4 for example letter.

## **Requests for Leave of Absence During Term Time**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The amendments make clear that the Head teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore holidays taken during term time will not be authorised. The Head teacher will determine

the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted for exceptional circumstances.

A child can be removed from the school's registers if they fail to return from an extended family holiday after both school and LA have tried to locate the pupil(s) or if there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absences and both the local authority and school have failed to locate pupil.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

- The school will monitor attendance on a weekly basis.
- Parents/carers who have not provided a reason for their child's absence will be contacted by telephone or letter.
- If parents/carers do not provide a reason within one week of receiving the letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This will only be amended with medical evidence.
- Registers will be monitored and parents/carers of pupils with less than 90% attendance will be notified in writing and asked to meet with the Head teacher where appropriate and referred.
- Parents/carers will be informed in writing if a child's attendance falls below 94%.
- Parents/carers will be informed in writing if a child's absence falls below 92% requesting medical evidence for all absence until attendance reaches 95%

### **Use of Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence**

The Local Authority, through the Attendance Improvement Officer, can consider issuing Penalty Notices to any parent / carer who repeatedly fails to accept their responsibility for sending their child to school on a regular basis.

The school has a right to use the Penalty Notice Scheme in circumstances where a child's attendance pattern shows repeated unauthorised absences. Letters will be written and meetings held in line with the scheme. If a parent does not ensure regular attendance and unauthorised absence continues, the school will apply to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice fine to be issued.

The amount of the penalty to be paid will be £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; and £120 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

If a Penalty Notice fine is not paid, the parent / carer will be at risk of legal action by the Local Authority.

### **Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) formerly Education Welfare Officer**

The AIO is employed by Hertfordshire's department for Children's Services.

- An AIO is allocated to every school to monitor attendance and support improvement where necessary.
- The AIO monitors the school's attendance registers and records every term.
- The AIO aims to work collaboratively with the school and parents/carers to improve pupil attendance.
- Parents/carers may also contact the AIO for impartial advice or information. The telephone number is available from the school office.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

- The school will actively seek to work with parents/carers where there is a genuine difficulty with attendance.
- Support strategies will be put in place for individual pupils where appropriate.

- When a child has an illness that means he/she will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the home education support service, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

### **Rewards for Good Attendance**

- Annual and termly certificates are awarded to pupils for 100% attendance and attendance over 96%.
- The Attendance Cup will be awarded to the class with the best attendance at the end of each week.
- Class attendance is shared in the newsletter to parents/carers.
- Individual rewards for attendance or punctuality may be given in conjunction with a Pastoral Support Plan or Individual Education Plan.
- Parents may receive letters in recognition of improved attendance and punctuality.
- The Punctuality Cup will be awarded to the class in KS2 who are most punctual at the end of each half term.
- Inter-house attendance competition.

### **Deletion from Roll**

A pupil's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been deleted from the admissions register. Full details are contained in regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) When a pupil's name is removed from the admissions register the school must notify their local Attendance Team. This duty extends to academies.

A pupil of compulsory school age should have his/her name deleted from the admissions register when:

- the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a School Attendance Order and another school is substituted by the LA for that named in the Order or the Order is revoked
- the pupil has been registered at another school. (Schools can register Traveller children even if they are on the roll of another school. The school the child normally attends is the base school; the other registration is temporary)
- the school has received written notification from the parent that they are educating the pupil themselves. (Elective Home Education)
- the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer lives within a reasonable distance of the school
- in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence, the pupil has failed to attend the school within the 10 school days immediately following the last day of absence which was granted and the school is not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause and both the school and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry to locate him/her
- the pupil is certified by the School Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- the pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days, the absence is unauthorised, *and* there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause *and* both the school and the AIO have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate him/her

- the pupil has died
- the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets *and* the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school *or* the pupil does

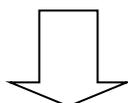
### **The Role of Governors**

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a half-termly report by e-mail from the School Business Manager. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will, therefore, examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that improving attendance continues to be a priority.

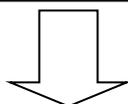
This policy will be reviewed annually by the Full Governing Body

# First Response

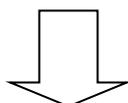
9.00  
Registers closed and known  
absences recorded with reasons



9.30  
Parents/carers of pupils who are  
absent without reason contacted  
by telephone  
Response recorded on register



10.30  
Parents/carers who have not  
responded receive another  
telephone call  
Response recorded on register



SLT informed of pupils who are  
absent from school without  
reason

## Appendix 2



### Aycliffe Drive Primary School

Head Teacher: Mrs. R.M.H. Green

Chair of Governors: Mrs. P. Gent

Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP2 6LJ

[www.aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk](http://www.aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk)

Tel: 01442 404008

[admin@aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk)

Fax: 01442 404013

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

#### **Reference: Below average attendance «percentage\_attendance»%**

Following routine monitoring of all students attendance at school, it has been identified that «chosen\_forename»'s attendance is below 94%. This is below primary school targets and below average attendance at Aycliffe Drive Primary School.

We accept that there may well be obvious reasons for absence, such as illness but we have a duty to inform you that you child's attendance is now below average.

We hope that by bringing this to your attention you can support «chosen\_forename» and the school to ensure «chosen\_forename» gains the greatest benefit that they can from their education, by regular school attendance.

However, if needed, please feel free to contact the school on 01442 404008 to book an appointment so that you can discuss any issues or concerns you feel may be impacting on your child's ability to establish and maintain a regular attendance pattern.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Robson  
**School Business Manager**



## Appendix 3



# Aycliffe Drive Primary School

Head Teacher: Mrs. R.M.H. Green  
Chair of Governors: Mrs. P. Gent

Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP2 6LJ  
www.aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk

Tel: 01442 404008

admin@aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk

Fax: 01442 404013

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### Reference: «chosen\_forename»'s attendance

«chosen\_forename»'s attendance is now below 92%.

This is well below the school's average attendance and is detrimental to «chosen\_forename»'s academic and social achievements.

Should your child have further absences they should be accompanied by medical evidence to ensure authorisation. This will remain in place until «chosen\_forename»'s attendance reaches 95% this academic year.

If attendance fails to improve your child's attendance will be raised with the Attendance Improvement Officer.

Please contact the school on 01442 404008 to book an appointment to discuss any issues or concerns you feel may be impacting «chosen\_forename»'s ability to establish and maintain a regular attendance pattern.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Robson  
**School Business Manager**





# Aycliffe Drive Primary School

Head Teacher: Mrs. R.M.H. Green  
Chair of Governors: Mrs. P. Gent

Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP2 6LJ  
www.aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk

Tel: 01442 404008

admin@aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk

Fax: 01442 404013

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**RE: Attendance**

I am writing to you in-line with our Attendance Policy.

«chosen\_forename»'s attendance is «percentage\_attendance»%. We have enclosed «chosen\_forename»'s Registration Certificate.

This is below the threshold of 90% for persistent absence. As a result, «chosen\_forename»'s attendance will be identified by the Attendance Improvement Officer as causing concern.

Our Attendance Policy and this is available on the school website, including our "First Response" procedures. If you would like a copy of the policy, please ask at the school office.

We have also published an information leaflet that tells you everything you need to know about attendance and why it is important. Please take some time to read this and share it with your child.

We will continue to monitor «chosen\_forename»'s attendance and hope to see further improvement this year.

If you would like to discuss this or we can support you in any way, please telephone the school office to make an appointment with Mrs Green.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Miss T Robson  
**School Business Manager**

