

Acre Hall Primary School

BRIGHT FUTURES PUPIL ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE & PROCEDURES

(to be read in conjunction with Bright Futures Pupil Attendance Policy)

These are the specific pupil attendance guidance and procedures for Acre Hall Primary School. The overarching policy can be found in the Trust Policies section of the website.

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1. Aims

- To ensure that overall attendance is 96% or higher
- To raise the profile of the importance of high-level attendance among students, parents and other staff
- To outline a procedure for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies
- To eradicate persistent lateness
- To explain the legal processes for persistent lateness and absence

2. Legislation and guidance

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) must receive a suitable full- time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens - either by registering their child at an school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. As a last resort, schools and local authorities have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

We seek to operate in ways which maximise student potential while supporting parents in meeting their legal requirements.

As a school we fulfil our responsibilities in respect of taking a morning and afternoon session registration; of being open for the required 190 student academy days unless prevented by extreme weather or other unforeseen exceptional circumstance, and by using the nationally recognised attendance codes.

3. Our procedures

3.1. Attendance register

In line with Department for Education guidance, we will take the attendance register at 9.00am. The morning register will close at 9.30am, meaning any subsequent student arrival will be coded as an unauthorised absence unless there is sufficient reason for this to be authorised.

3.2. Unplanned absence

If a student is absent from school, it is vital that a parent contacts us at the earliest opportunity to provide a reason for absence, and no later than 9.30am. Primarily, student absence should be communicated via a telephone call . In the event that absence cannot be communicated via a telephone calls, please email admin@ahps.bright-futures.co.uk or contact 0161 748 4356.

Absence can only be authorised where there is good cause. If no adequate reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised. The decision and authority to authorise an absence lies with us in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996. Parents cannot authorise absence. Where deemed necessary, we reserve the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness. After five days of authorised absence across the academic year, or three days of consecutive authorised absence, we will unauthorise all subsequent absence. The process by which we determine authorisation of absence can be found in Appendix A.

3.3. Medical or dental appointments

It is an expectation of the school that medical and dental appointments are taken out of school time. Missing lessons, even for medical and dental appointments, has a detrimental impact on student progress and achievement.

We recognise that it is not always possible to schedule appointments out of school time. In the rare occasion that a student must attend a medical appointment during school time, parents must notify the school office in advance and provide evidence of the appointment. Patterns of medical and dental appointments during school sessions over a period of time will result in further follow up investigation and action. Regardless of the reason, all medical appointments are recorded as an absence, and will impact upon the student's overall attendance percentage.

EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE (EBSNA)

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) is a term used to describe children and young people who experience challenges in attending school due to negative feelings (such as anxiety). Where there are emotional, or mental health reasons for non-attendance, school will work with students and parents/carers at the earliest possible opportunity to try to understand the barriers to attendance, and where possible, to develop a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to overcome these barriers and support to maximise face-to-face attendance. A plan will be formulated and after implementation will be regularly reviewed.

Where a student has been absent for 15 days (consecutive or in total due to emotional health) school will notify the Local Authority.

Where in-school pastoral and/or external specialist support is facilitated but not engaged with, school will work with the Local Authority to determine whether to formalise support or to enforce through legal intervention. In instances of long-term or repeated absence for EBSNA, school will seek medical evidence to assist in assessing whether additional support is needed.

4. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is a whole school initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, students and all members of school staff.

The table below highlights the whole school approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. This is led by Mrs Kan who works with school staff to monitor and improve attendance, while raising the profile and emphasising the importance of attendance at individual and whole school level.

Colour	Attendance %	Concern
Green	96-100%	No Concern-best chance of academic success
Yellow	90-95.9%	Concern-Risk of underachievement
Red	0-89.9%	Extreme Risk-Persistent Absentee

In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement, we use a range of rewards and positive reinforcement strategies. As appropriate to student age these include:

- Weekly Celebration Assembly mentions
- Displays of class attendance
- Class rewards for highest attendance
- Certificates for improvements

5. Attendance monitoring

The School has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in respect of attendance concern.

The principles underpinning the model will be used to promote consistency both across the different year groups of compulsory school age and within each year group.

In cases that levels of attendance decreases, we will make use of the following escalation guidance:

1. **96% - 100%, or increased attendance**- Students in this group are in the best possible position to achieve their full potential. Class teachers will celebrate these students weekly, and the school will recognise and reinforce their level of attendance.
2. **Yellow 90% – 95.9%, or an initial fall in attendance** - Students in this group will receive support to increase their attendance to above 96%. This will be in *the form of a letter home*.
3. **Red 0 - 89.9%, or persistent consecutive or non-consecutive weeks of falling attendance** - Students in this group will receive support from Senior Leaders. This will be in the form of a letter home and a meeting with the Senior Leader. As this attendance percentage continues to fall below the Government Persistent Absence target, it may be necessary to refer the poor attendance to the Education Welfare Officer and Legal Services at the Local Authority. They may wish to work with parents/carers to improve the attendance of the students in the red group. This includes taking legal action where required.

To support this process the Senior Leadership Team will meet weekly to discuss students whose attendance is declining. A series of actions to support improvement will be agreed, delegated and recorded.

4. Lateness and punctuality

It is the School's responsibility to provide the best education possible. This can only be achieved if a student attends regularly and punctually. We expect all students to arrive at the school on time. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. A student arriving late will disrupt not only their own continuity of learning but also that of others. Occasional lateness to school or lessons will result in a discussion between the parents and a Senior Leader; patterns of lateness over a period of time will result in further follow up investigation and action.

All students should arrive at school by 9.00am ready for the register. Sessions begin at 9.05am. The register will close at 9.30am, and subsequent student arrivals will be recorded with an unauthorised absence, unless there is valid reason for this to be authorised.

7. Following up absence

Parents of a student who is not present in school will be notified of their absence. Parents have the responsibility to inform us of student absence. It is a safeguarding priority for us to know the whereabouts of all students.

Absences will be followed up through the attendance intervention system, which will include, but is not limited:

- i. Phone calls to parents/guardians
- ii. Attendance Letters

- iii. Meetings with Senior Leaders
- iv. Home Visits
- v. Attendance Trackers

7.2 Reporting to parents and carers

In order to support parents in meeting their legal requirements and to maximise individual student attendance, we seek to keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and to actively involve parents on attendance issues.

Methods include:

- Unexplained/unaccounted for absence letter asking for reasons
- Escalating letters warning of concerns
- Parental meetings
- Attendance percentages included on student reports and reported annually
- Discussion at Parents' Meetings/Evenings

8. Authorised and unauthorised absence

8.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

In order to maximise individual achievement, parents should avoid making routine appointments for students during the school day. Parents should not take family holidays during the term time period.

Parents should be advised that leave of absence can only be authorised at the discretion of Mrs Kan (Assistant Head of School) and will only be agreed in very exceptional circumstances. Further information regarding this can be found in the Bright Futures Educational Trust Attendance and Punctuality Policy. On the rare occasion that absences is requested, this should be submitted via the 'Request Planned Absence' form available on the school website. It should be submitted to the school office no later than 7 days before the planned absence.

8.2 Legal sanctions

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school on a regular and punctual basis. Should any student's attendance or punctuality become a concern, they will be subject to an Education Welfare referral. The school and Trafford local authority will work in partnership where legal action is required.

Legal action includes:

- **Penalty Notice:** A Penalty Notice may be issued for each student who has unauthorised absence or lateness. Following 6 sessions of unauthorised absence, a Penalty Warning Letter will be issued. There will be a review for three weeks, and should the student's attendance continue to decline, a Penalty Notice will be issued once the pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.

A fixed penalty notice can be issued without warning in whereby:

A leave of absence of 5 days (10 sessions) or more was taken during term time without the school's consent.

If an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken and there have been instances of previous unauthorised absences in an 8 week period. This can be one day.

Where a parent has taken the pupil on holiday during term-time with the school's authorisation and has failed to return the pupil to school on the date agreed.

The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 42 day period, a prosecution will be sought.

- Prosecution for unauthorised absence: It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the School. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. If a student's attendance continues to decline, and unauthorised absence increases despite efforts by the Academy to support the pupil in attending school, a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service, upon which a Court Panel meeting will be convened.

Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

9. Children at Risk of Missing Education

Policies and guidance related to Children at Risk of Missing Education can be found in the OCL Attendance Policy.

The contact for Trafford Borough Council Attendance issues is cme@trafford.gov.uk

10. Students leaving the academy and Removal from Roll

Acre Hall Primary School has a commitment to safeguard students. Therefore, destination of all students who leave school will be tracked.

School leaders will ensure that detailed records are kept for students who stop attending the academy and are removed from the roll/admissions register.

Appendix 1: The procedure by which the Academy determines unauthorised absence

