AYSCOUGHFEE HALL SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

At School, attendance is viewed as a partnership between the family and the school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education and look to parents/guardians to support this objective. We believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Attendance at school is a legal requirement. The school undertakes to comply in all matters relating to admission and attendance with ISI Regulatory Requirements (Part 3, paragraph 17), the most recent version of DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' and the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Scope and Application

This policy applies to the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations of the school to record attendance and absence.

Publication and Availability

This policy is published on the school website.

This policy is highlighted to parents when pupils join the school and parents will be reminded of it at the beginning of the school year and other times as deemed necessary. This policy is available in hard copy on request.

Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Allergy Safety and Anaphylaxis Policy
- Attendance Leaflet for Parents
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Registration Policy
- School Handbook

Key School Contacts

- The school senior attendance champion is the Headteacher,
- On a day-to-day basis, parents/carers should contact the school office with attendance matters:
- For more detailed support on attendance, parents/carers should contact their child's class teacher in the first instance, the school Wellbeing Champion, or the Senior Attendance Champion. Please use the school office email to make initial contact with any member of staff about attendance.

The School Day

The timings of the school day are as follows:

Registration opening time – 9.00am – School gates open at 8.40am for all pupils.
Registration closing time 9.15am – all pupils arriving after this time will be classed as late.

The School uses national attendance codes as per the most recent version of Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

All pupils are required to be in school before registration at 9.00am. The school day ends at 3.20pm for all children – the only exception to this will be Kindergarten children who are not yet in school on a full timetable or children for whom a reduced timetable has been agreed. Many pupils remain beyond 3.20pm to take part in extra-curricular activities under the supervision of a member of staff or outside provider who has been checked and vetted by the school. If a child is not attending a previously booked after school club for any reason the school must be informed by the parent or carer to comply with our safeguarding requirements.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by members of staff or a parent/guardian for a trip/visit or sporting fixture. Details of any such occurrence will have been provided to parents/guardians in advance.

What is an acceptable attendance rate?

The school promotes excellent attendance for every pupil while recognising that genuine illness and exceptional circumstances will occur. 90% attendance or below is classed as persistent absence and the school is obliged to engage with the local authority in such cases.

Poor attendance at school can seriously affect a child's:

- Learning and attainment in school.
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships.
- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

Reduced Timetables

The school recognises that in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for a child to have a reduced timetable. Where this is deemed to be necessary, the following will apply:

- The reduced timetable will be for an exceptional circumstance
- Will be time-limited
- Will require parental agreement and engagement
- Will be reviewed regularly
- Will have a written reintegration plan

Responsibilities of the School

The school acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the school. To meet its attendance obligations and priorities, the school will:

- Maintain attendance registers in compliance with DfE 'Working together to improve attendance guidance' (2024). Codes are allocated to show reasons for absence (detailed in the school registration policy).

- Consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents. Where there are challenges to attendance, the school will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, the local authority, to address them.
- Recognise its legal duty to report certain attendance issues to the local authority – specifically, absence due to illness for any 15 days or more during a school year (this is cumulative across the whole academic year) an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of ten days or more (other than for reasons of sickness or an authorised leave of absence), failure to attend regularly, and deletion from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, the school is required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the local authority in which the pupil lives.
- Respond to non-attendance and/or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the school's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted manner in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.
- Monitor and report on attendance to staff, parents and the local authority.

The school adopts a support-first approach to attendance. Attendance concerns will be explored with pupils and families at the earliest opportunity to understand barriers and identify appropriate support before considering any escalation

We encourage all parents to give a high priority to regular school attendance and work with us to ensure positive attitudes towards attendance are developed. Attendance related help, support and advice is available from school.

Admissions Register

The Admissions Register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must, by law contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admissions register for a reason set out in regulation 8 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

When a pupil joins or leaves the school, or is dual registered, the school emails the 'change of roll' to rollchanges@lincolnshire.gov.uk which includes forwarding information about where the pupil will be educated after School. If the school has not been provided information about the school the pupil is moving to, they will be registered as a 'Child Missing from Education' in the same way, including to the residential local authority, and the family will be contacted by the relevant local authority.

The school will also inform the Lincolnshire Inclusion and Attendance team if any pupil is on an agreed, temporary, reduced timetable (exceptional circumstances only), or parents elect to home educate their child.

Responsibilities of Staff

<u>The School Attendance Champion</u>

- To establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff.
- To regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.
- To have oversight of and analyse attendance data.
- The school will provide information to the local authority where required by law or where attendance concerns meet statutory reporting thresholds.

- To communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.
- To discuss any concerns about attendance or persistent absence with parents or members of the pastoral team if more appropriate.

The Office Staff

- Contact parents before 9.15am if a child fails to appear in school.
- Make enquires about unexplained absences, including those with the school day, and follow up with parents to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the school.

All Staff

- All staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about this.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly, at the school at which they are registered.
- Children must attend every day that the school is open (unless they are sick, or permission has been granted in advance).
- Parents must ensure their child arrives in time for registration at 9.00am. The register closes at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after the closure of the register will be recorded in accordance with the school's Registration Policy.

Responsibility of Pupils

Dependent on age and levels of understanding, pupils are expected to:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher of another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning equipment and on time for the lesson.
- Follow school procedure if they arrive late, which is vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

Reporting Absence

- If a child is unwell, parents/guardians should telephone the school office before 9.00am on the first day of absence and either telephone or email on absence@ahs.me.uk for each subsequent day until the child returns to school. On return to school, parents are required to email giving a reason for absence (if this has not already been done during the absence period). Please use the email address absence@ahs.me.uk. The school will always telephone on the first day of an unexplained absence. Parents or guardians should provide a minimum of two emergency contact telephone numbers.
- Requests for absence must be made in writing and reach the school at least 2 weeks in advance.
- Requests for exceptional absence (i.e., absence for days other than Religious Festivals, medical or dental appointments or for illness) should be sent to the Headteacher at least two weeks in advance.
- The school will always aim to send parents/guardians details of term dates at least a year in advance so that family holidays can be arranged without disrupting a child's education. The

general policy of the Proprietors is **not** to allow holidays to be taken during term time, in keeping with the most recent version of DfE 'Working together to improve attendance'.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given.

These include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the registers have closed without a reasonable explanation.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Leaving school for no reason during the school day.
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. Parents who are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems.

Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil becomes a **persistent absentee** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will considerably impact on a child's education and have a lasting effect on their learning and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% of more schooling is defined by the Government as **severely absent.** Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need intensive support.

Monitoring of Attendance

Regular checks are made of the school's attendance data. For children whose absence from school is categorised as 'persistent' – 10% or more – more detailed analysis is undertaken. If the absence is predominantly due to illness or other unplanned circumstances (rather than due to authorised leave of absence, granted in advance) the school will contact parents. An explanation will be provided of how the child's level of absence is approaching the definition of 'persistent' and a discussion initiated to ascertain whether there are additional challenges the child is currently facing that are impacting on their attendance.

Where attendance gives cause for concern, the school may implement an attendance action plan with agreed targets, strategies, review points and identified responsibilities

Following discussion with parents, if any subsequent support to improve attendance is not sufficient to address the challenges being faced by the child in question, the school will work in

conjunction with the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Partnership (LSCP); Early Help Team, the Lincolnshire Attendance Team; or any other relevant external agencies to access further support.

Attendance Thresholds

95%-100%	Expected
90.1%-94.9%	At risk of persistent absence
Below 90%	Persistent absence
51%-79%	At risk of severe absence
Below 50%	Severe absence

We recognise that individual pupils and their families may encounter additional challenges that might impact their attendance. Families that require additional support should, in the first instance, contact their child's class teacher who will liaise with the Head Teacher.

Additional Needs

The school recognises that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

- The school will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.
- It will also work with parents and where appropriate, with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Where attendance is affected by a medical condition, including severe allergy or anaphylaxis, the school will work with families to ensure appropriate support arrangements are in place. Further guidance can be found in the Allergy Safety and Anaphylaxis Policy and Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy. Following serious allergic reactions or anaphylaxis, the school will work with parents and healthcare professionals where appropriate to support the pupil's safe return to school.
- Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan the school will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for Early Help.
- The school will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days. The school may request medical evidence to support the reasons for any prolonged period of absence if a child is at risk of severe absence. This will be proportionate and considered on a case-by-case basis. Evidence is not automatically required for every illness.

Child Missing in Education Reporting Duties

The school has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend and their absence is unauthorised. The school must report unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.

Action will be taken in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the requirements of the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education if any absence of a pupil from the school gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Lateness

Punctuality is very important, and the school expects children to be in the classroom and ready for registration before the 9.00am bell sounds unless there is an unavoidable delay. If a child misses the start of a school day, they can miss work and vital information relating to the day ahead. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help the children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How We Manage Lateness

Registers are marked twice daily (at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions). A child will receive a late mark if they are not in school by the correct time. Registers close 15 minutes after being taken. In accordance with regulations, if a child arrives after the close of registration they will be recorded as ‘late’ in the register, and this will count as an unauthorised absence. Parents who are unexpectedly held up in the morning for any reason should contact the office to let school know that their child will be late. This will not be classed as an unauthorised absence.

Information Sharing

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

The school, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familiar harms).

The school will attend regular targeted support meetings (TSM) with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- New pupil and deletion returns
- Attendance returns
- Sickness return
- Where appropriate, the school is expected to inform a pupil’s social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

Championing Good Attendance

To encourage and champion excellent attendance, the school will apply the following incentives for the children:

1. Each week in assembly a class will be awarded the attendance certificate. This will be calculated on average attendance for the class over the week.

2. At the end of each term a certificate of 100% attendance will be given out to children who have no absences for that term. One term's full attendance will achieve a bronze certificate, two term's full attendance will receive a silver certificate and 3 term's full attendance will receive a gold certificate.

Any reference to the word 'School' implicitly includes all its associated clubs/activities including Kids Club. This policy also applies to EYFS

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