

Auriol Junior School Attendance Policy

The Government, through the Department for Education (DFE), has stated in its guidance (July 2008) that "Schools must remember that they can only approve absence for family holidays if they consider that there are exceptional reasons which warrant the holiday."

This policy for Auriol Junior School has been developed from that adopted by the Epsom and Ewell Partnership of Schools during 2008. All schools in the Partnership are committed to developing and implementing a consistent and transparent set of joint standards and approaches which improve and maintain attendance in local schools.

In support of this the Inclusion Officers, attached to local schools, helps monitor and improve attendance by supporting families who are causing concern.

The Standard Policy

The standard policy, which comes into immediate effect, states:

All holiday requests will be considered to be an unauthorised leave of absence. Any appeal will be heard by the Governing Body, whose decision will be final. All other requests for leave will be considered on a case by case basis by the Governing Body that may, at its discretion, delegate some decisions to the Headteacher. Again, the decision of the Governing Body will be final.

Auriol Junior School, along with other local schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance, but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 18) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offense under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice. In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 consecutive days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority, although schools may wish to discuss such an absence sooner with their Inclusion Officer if the absence is unauthorised, parents cannot be contacted or there are other concerns. Schools are required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the DFE and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of Auriol Junior School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, Governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

Parent Responsibility and the Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child. The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Registers

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- An event that could be reasonably scheduled outside of term time
- Holidays
- Visits to family members, if they could be scheduled outside term time.
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.
- All day medical appointments without evidence showing that an entire day's absence is necessary.
- Where attendance falls below 90%, or you have been previously advised that attendance is a concern, medical evidence may be required for any future absences due to illness. If this is not received, absences will remain unauthorised.
- Entrance exams will be authorised for the half day during which the exam falls. Any further absence relating to an entrance exam will be recorded as unauthorised. This includes any absence on the same day directly before or after an exam. A limit of 3 sessions only will be authorised.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance return purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities

- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

4. Licenced Approved Child Employment Absence

Where an absence has been licensed by child employment, during term time, that absence will be recorded as authorised. It will still report as an absence from school and will affect a pupil's attendance record and will therefore trigger a letter to warn when your child is close to reaching the persistent absence level of 90%.

Then school reserves the right to unauthorise absences licensed by child employment if any of the following apply:

- Missing public exams (including SATS)
- A child is not achieving expected progress in their learning
- If child has had frequent unexplained absences
- Additional absence due to tiredness
- If attendance is already considered to be a concern

Registration & Lateness

The school day begins at 8.45 a.m. Any child arriving after the doors have closed at 8.45 a.m. must be taken to the school office to sign in.

Morning registration will take place at 8.45 a.m. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes and any child who arrives after the register has been taken, but during the 15 minutes will be marked late (L).

Any pupil who arrives after the registers close at 9.00 a.m. will be marked as 'late after close of registers' (U), which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence. If a reason is given for the late arrival, for example, attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. (See Appendix 1)

The afternoon registration will be taken at 1.10 pm.

If a child arrives late to school on more than 6 occasions in a half term, a letter will be sent home. In cases of persistent late arrival to school, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Deputy Headteacher.

Escalation Process

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school. However, if the child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedure will apply:

First Day Absence

The school will send a text to the parent (or phone where no mobile telephone is provided) to request a reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. A message will be left where no contact can be made. Further texts will be sent or phone calls made on all subsequent days that the child is absent until a satisfactory reason has been given.

Ten Days' Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Inclusion Service. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken. For a child on the 'at Risk' Register on defined as a 'Child in Need', contact with social care and/or the Inclusion Service should also be made at an earlier stage.

Where a child is absent from school the following procedure will be followed for welcoming them back. If they've been off for one day, the teacher welcomes them back and checks they are ok. If they are off for a

few days, further communication from the school office will be made. For longer term absences a more formal reintegration will take place with a plan to catch up; some sessions may be provided where the child is given support.

Frequent Absence

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. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

The Inclusion Service meets with school staff on a regular basis to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences or absence below 92%, the school may seek to resolve the problem with the parents by:

1. Sending a letter to parents stating concerns.
2. Arranging a meeting at school with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

If this is unsuccessful the school may refer the case to the school's Inclusion Officer.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment

Parents will be notified by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and may be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

Exceptional Leave of Absence

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during school term-time to go on holiday. Any financial savings that you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

1. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Graduates earn an average of £15.01 per hour; young people who leave with no qualifications earn an average of £7.44 per hour.

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in **exceptional** circumstances.

Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made, in writing, to the Head Teacher who will consider the application on behalf of the Governors.

If there is an absence without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, the Inclusion Service will be notified and the parent may be liable to a Penalty Notice.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

- Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions (5 days) or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken. The above do not have to be consecutive absences and each case will be considered individually.
- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or the Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
- Pupils identified by police and Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences. When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent / carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent / carer. If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued.
- The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:
£60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority must then consider prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

The Inclusion Officer

The Inclusion Service monitors the attendance of all children on a weekly basis. The Inclusion Officer will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to the Inclusion Service. The Inclusion Officer will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, but unauthorised absence persists, the Inclusion Officer can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Rewards

Certificates will be awarded for 100% whole year attendance.

Reward Sticker = 100% attendance per term. Medical Appointments for life long conditions will be taken into consideration.

Roles & Responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- Encourage good attendance

Attendance Officer:

- Ensures morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date
- Contacts parents and requests reasons for absence
- Collates daily attendance records and, together with the attendance lead, puts in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality

Headteacher:

- Monitors and reviews the attendance policy on an annual basis
- Monitors and reviews the attendance procedures and works with the attendance officer and the Inclusion Service to ensure reasons for absence are identified and interventions are put in place.
- Identifies and monitors attendance of PA students
- Promotes the attendance policy within the school and ensures that it is implemented effectively.

Date approved by staff:	Half Term 5 2020
Date to be reviewed:	Half Term 5 2021
Responsibility:	Headteacher