



**INTAKE**  
**PRIMARY ACADEMY**

Astrea Academy Trust

INSPIRING BEYOND MEASURE

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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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September 2018

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, and parents/carers, local community and the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

## **Aims:**

- To improve the quality of school life.
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'.
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself.
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.
- To improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism.
- To promote and support good attendance throughout a child's time at our Academy.

## **Objectives**

- To involve the children more in their school attendance.
- To improve communication with parents/cares around their child's attendance.
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children's attendance.
- To recognise the important role of the class teacher and support staff in promoting good attendance.
- Effective working relationship with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance.

## **Actions**

- To have an effective way of collecting and monitoring attendance data.
- To discuss targets agreed with the Education Welfare Officer.
- To ensure that the school is aware of local targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups such as Looked after Children or young people.
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and whole school in a context of all known factors and record these in a School Attendance Plan.
- To target resources and implement where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable timeframe.
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors informed of policy and practise.
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some groups, such as Looked after Children or young people.

- For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.
- Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in their class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create patterns of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the schools target for attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance through assemblies, displays and messages home.

## **Understanding types of absence**

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not the parent) as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good caused like illness or hospital appointments which fall unavoidably during school time. Parents/Cares are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/cares keeping children off unnecessarily.
- Routine dental/medical appointments that could be made after school or during school holidays.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been explained properly.
- Children that arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping.
- Birthdays.
- Haircuts.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. All our PA pupils and their parents will be invited in to school for an Attendance meeting and may include additional support through the school nurse or the Education Welfare Officer. We may use individual incentive programmes, individual targets or group work around raising attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism can lead to an Education Penalty Warning letter being sent to parents/cares, if this has no impact it can lead to an Education Penalty Notice being issued.

## **Absence Procedures**

If a child is absent the parent/carer must follow these procedures:

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and any subsequent days.

If a child is absent we will:

Send out a text to parent(s)/carer(s) as to the reason for absence if we have not had contact.

If a reply is not received a telephone call will be made to parent(s)/carer(s)

Discuss with the Education Welfare Officer if attendance continues to fall.

## **The Education Welfare Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with school staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way then the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority. An Education Penalty Warning letter may be sent to parents at this point. The EWO will try to resolve the situation by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persists, then Education Penalty Notices can be issued or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Full details of the options to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help and information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their number is 01302 736504 or email: [APWS@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:APWS@doncaster.gov.uk)

If a child's attendance gives cause for concern and sickness is continually reported, support will be offered.

## **Lateness**

Lateness is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arrival can also disrupt lessons, be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Good timekeeping is a life skill which can help children as they progress through school life and out into the wider world.

The school starts at 8:45am when the doors open. We expect children to be ready to come in and learn when the doors open. Doors close at 8:55am and lessons start. The registers are taken at 9:05am.

Children who arrive after this time will need to enter through the office and will receive a late mark. If a child arrives after 9:35am then they receive an unauthorised absence mark for that session.

If a child has persistent lateness then the parent(s)/carer(s) will be invited into school for a meeting with the Attendance Lead to discuss any problems with getting their child to school on time. If it still continues then it will be discussed with the EWO and could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued.

The school can be approached at any time if you have any problems with getting your child into school.

## **Leave of Absence**

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England)Regulations 2006 make clear from September 2013 Principals may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. These are defined as follows:

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

1. Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specific time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be evidenced by the production of the policy document of the organisation.
2. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.

Leave of absence forms must be completed four weeks before the proposed holiday and before it is booked.

The school will write to parent(s)/carer(s) to inform them if permission has been granted and if not, what the consequences of taking your child/ren out of school will be.

