



Amington Heath Primary School and Nursery
Attendance Policy

LEA Policy

Adapted by Charlotte Davies

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This policy outlines the context for promoting and encouraging good attendance and where possible avoids poor attendance issues before they develop into a pattern.

Amington Heath's policy respects the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The following aspects of the Convention relate most directly to this policy:

Article 3: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 28: All children and young people have a right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of.

Article 29: Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full.

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We believe promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

At Amington Heath Primary School, we will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school, such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Early Help Team such as Education Welfare Officers, in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance.

We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all our other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.

How is this policy shared with parents and children?

On first joining the school, parents will be informed of this policy. This policy will also be shared on our school website. There will be a section in the prospectus that refers to attendance and every year the 'Parent Friendly Attendance Pamphlet' will be sent out explaining the whole school system. As part of our citizenship work, we will teach children the importance of punctuality and good attendance and their responsibilities in being ready and alert for learning.

Admissions

Amington keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

New parents

When new children arrive at Amington Heath as mid-year transfers, attendance data will be passed to the attendance administrator. Where this information is cause for concern the Head teacher will arrange an opportunity to discuss this and share the policy with new parents.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, then we will inform the Local Authority via electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Key Roles within School for Supporting Attendance

A number of Amington staff other than parents, children and teachers are also responsible for supporting attendance in school. They are:

The Chair of Governors, Mr Legge – is responsible for reviewing and monitoring actions defined in this policy and the impact of this on whole school attendance and learning. He can be contacted on office@amingtonheath.staffs.sch.uk

The Head teacher, Mrs Davies – on behalf of the Governors, is responsible for ensuring all stakeholders play their role to maintain good levels of attendance for all pupils by following and executing the remit of this policy. She can be contacted on office@amintonheath.staffs.sch.uk or the 01827 337465

The Inclusion Manager, Mrs Fennelly – is responsible for monitoring and supporting attendance across school. She can be contacted on senco@amintonheath.staffs.sch.uk or the 01827 337465

Admin officer with attendance responsibility, Jeanette Hegney– is responsible for maintaining accurate records of attendance, liaising with the school EWO and Inclusion Manager and administration for the school attendance system (letters level 1, 2, 3). She can be contacted on admin@amintonheath.staffs.sch.uk or the 01827 337465

The Family Support Worker, Janice Mackenzie – is available to support with attendance issues and strategies to support good attendance. She can be contacted on 01827 337465.

Local Authority – LAs have responsibility under sections 444, 444A and 4441A of the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school. This duty is often exercised through the Education Welfare Service and its Education Welfare Officers (EWOs).

Attendance Procedures at Amington

School starts at 8.55 a.m. each morning.

The school gate and doors opens at 8.45am. The school gate closes at 8.55am.

Registration takes place at 8.55am and lessons start at 9.00am.

Any pupil arriving between 8.55am & 9.15am should go to the main office where they will receive a formal late mark (L).

Any pupil arriving after 9.15am will receive a formal unauthorized late mark (U).

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absence:

-Parents are required to telephone school and inform school on the morning of the first day of absence. School operates a first contact system, which means that should we have not been informed of a child's absence before 9.30, we will text or phone to identify why their child is not in school. This is part of schools commitment to safeguarding the safety and welfare of children.

-When a reason for absence is not provided school will send a letter asking why. 7 days after sending the letter if no reason is still given the N code on the register will be changed to a **O**. This **O** code is taken into account when identifying persistent absence. It means that an absence is unauthorised.

-Appropriate medical evidence will be requested to authorise any absences that are due to illness if a child's attendance is or falls below 90%. If no appropriate medical evidence can be provided, then the absence will be recorded as a O.

Vulnerable Children

Children on the child protection register, who are being supported by the Early Help team or who are categorised as a persistent absentee are listed in the office. These are on a priority list which means our attendance administrator will call them before 9.30am. If a reason isn't given as to absence the relevant professionals will be called or Janice Mackenzie, Family Support Worker, will carry out a home visit.

-Where a child has 20 sessions or more off school without school's permission the local authority must be informed and a safe & well check carried out by a member of the school team.

The Stages of Attendance Monitoring at Amington Heath

The Inclusion Manager, Headteacher and Education Welfare Service EWO will follow this system if attendance dips below 92%:

- **Stage 1** If the attendance of a pupil is 92% or below, or a pattern of time off can be seen, parents will be sent a stage 1 letter asking if support is needed and that their child's attendance is going to be monitored for the next four weeks for improvement.
- **Stage 2** If after four weeks there is no improvement school will send a stage 2 letter asking parents to meet the Head Teacher or Inclusion Manager to discuss the absences further. Support for the parent and child will be offered. Once support and action is agreed at this meeting the child's attendance will be monitored for a further four weeks. At this point medical evidence may be requested.
- **Stage 3** If improvement is not seen after the four weeks in part 2 Education Welfare will be contacted. They have the following legal powers to enforce school attendance orders, prosecution for irregular attendance, penalty notices for irregular attendance and education supervision orders. See the explanation of a penalty notice below.

What are Penalty Notices?

These are fines, issued by Staffordshire Education Welfare Service, for a child's unauthorised absence from school and may follow stage 3 of the school procedures. Parents who are subject to a penalty notice have 3 choices:

-Pay the fine early, within 21 days, and it is £60

-Pay after 21 days but within 28 days and the fine is £120.

-Don't pay the fine. In this case the Notice will be withdrawn and Magistrates Court proceedings will start. This could result in a fine of up to £2500 for each child whose attendance is causing concern and for each parent involved in the prosecution

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence or the presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

1. There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
2. There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher (e.g. family holiday)
3. Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
4. The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
5. A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Other conditions:

- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.

Appointments for Dentist /Doctor

Wherever possible parents are requested not to take children out of school for medical/dental appointments. Such appointments should be made after school. Where this is not at all possible, parents are asked to try and arrange these in the afternoon (as oppose to the morning) or as close to the end of day as possible. Where a child's attendance is below 90% (a persistent absentee) and is not improving evidence may be requested.

Late marks

Being late to school can be extremely unsettling for children particularly when they arrive into class and teaching has already begun. All parents bringing children to school late are asked to record this in the late book stating the reason for being late. A child is deemed as late after register is taken. This will be marked as 'L' on the register. If a child is later than 9.15 a 'U' will be recorded on the register. This is an unauthorised absence and is taken in to account if the child becomes a persistent absentee (below 90%). If a child does not attend before lunch (12.00 in EYFS and 12.30 in KS1+2) then this will be marked as a O.

If there are almost 10 late marks in any termly report (or if lateness has been raised as an issue by a member of staff), parents will be informed that this is not acceptable and how this is impacting on learning in class. Where persistent late marks keep arising on a weekly basis with no sign of improvement, parents will be invited to discuss this with the Head teacher to see how it can be rectified. A target date will be agreed upon (usually 4 weeks' time) to improve the situation. If visible improvement happens no further action will be taken. If lateness persists a final warning letter will be issued and a EWO referral made. This may lead to a fine (see penalty notices above)

Monitoring attendance at Amington

Attendance is monitored and analysed regularly by the Inclusion Manager. The stage 1, 2, 3 letters link with this.

Each term attendance is shared for parents' attention. It is either on the termly reports written by the teachers or issued as colour coded certificates to indicate if attendance is good, beginning to cause concern, or causing significant concern. Information will be sent as follows:

Green Letter	95% - 100% Well Done. This is excellent.	If you are in the green group you have been absent for less than two weeks in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.
Yellow Letter	90% - 94% Be Careful.	If you are in the yellow group you could be missing up to 2 weeks of learning in the whole year.
Red Letter	Less than 90% Persistent Absence Pupil.	You are now a persistent absence pupil and are missing more than 6 weeks of learning in the school year.

Celebrations of attendance

Good attendance will be celebrated through our Facebook Page and in assemblies. Each half term the class winning class attendance (the most number of weeks) will be able to sit at the VIP table during Lunchtime as their reward. At the end of each term children with 100% attendance will have a special certificate as will those who show the most improvement in attendance.

Absence requests

In order to have complete clarity and equality for all parents, Governors have agreed that no absences for holiday requests, day visits or similar will be authorised other than in exceptional circumstances. This also reflects latest DFE guidance and ensures that there are not mixed messages with parents (who may query why some absences have been authorised and others not). An absence request form is available for parents from the office and is attached to this policy. Only in very extreme circumstances may the Head teacher on behalf of Governors and at their discretion, allow an authorised absence and this will be **the exception and not the norm**. From January 1st 2018 ANY period of unauthorised leave may result in a penalty notice fine.

Should an absence be declined and subsequently a claim for illness made on the same day the absence will be recorded as unauthorised as a matter of course. Unauthorised leave of absence may lead to a penalty notice.

Appeals

If a parent disagrees with the refusal for an absence to be authorised they have the right to appeal in writing to the Personnel Committee. They must do this within 7 days of receiving the Head teacher letter stating the reasons for the absence needing to be taken in term-time and why they are appealing against the decision. In turn, a response will be provided in writing from the Personnel Committee after investigating the case. A response will happen no longer than 30 working days after the appeal letter has been received. In some instances, this may mean decisions are overturned retrospectively and until that time the absence will remain as unauthorised.

Reporting to Governors

Bi-yearly attendance reports will be shared with governors so they can keep abreast of fluctuations in whole school attendance figures. Where the Head teacher has permitted (in extreme circumstances) time away from school this will also be reported, along with numbers of children causing concern and actions taken by the Head teacher. Attendance data will also form part of the Head teacher's report to full Governors.

Appendices

Appendix A Leave of absence request form

Appendix B Parents letter to authorise attendance

Reference

Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices Sept 2017

DFE School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities- November 2016