

Astwood Bank Primary Attendance Policy



Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team/Governors
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Last reviewed on:	October 2023
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Next review due by:	September 2024
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“Improving attendance is everyone’s business.”
(Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2022)

At Astwood Bank Primary School we believe strongly that attendance matters because children who regularly attend school:

- Are happier because they can understand what is happening around them and can join in activities knowing what went on before.
- Learn at a faster rate than children who do not regularly attend.
- Understand the routines and expectations of school and behaviour or feelings of their own self worth are less likely to be an issue.

“The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.” (Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2022)

Astwood Bank Primary School aims to have an attendance rate of 95%. This is benchmarked with national and local attendance figures.

Parents can help us by:

- Ringing or contacting the school office via ScholarPack on the first morning of all absences with the reason behind the absence and stating when the child will likely return.
- Sending an email or ScholarPack message explaining the reason for absence on their child’s return to school after an illness (this is a legal requirement)
- Keeping the school informed by telephone, ScholarPack message or email if a child is likely to be away for over a week.

The school will:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls/email/text as soon as possible, especially for persistent absentees.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in weekly newsletters, the school prospectus and the Home-School Agreement
- Publish your child’s attendance rate in her/his annual school report.
- Provide real-time attendance figures via the ScholarPack app.
- Let parents know if we have concerns regarding a child’s attendance.
- If we continue to have concerns about poor attendance, make a referral to the School Attendance Officer, who will support the school with attendance matters.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as ‘authorised absences.’ These may be granted in exceptional circumstances and the school considers each request on an individual basis, at the Headteacher’s discretion e.g. If a child is ill; there is a bereavement in the immediate family; or a religious occasion such as Eid is observed.

On very rare occasions there may be other reasons, other than illness, for a child’s absence. The school must be informed so that we can work out the best way forward for the benefit of the child.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as 'unauthorised absences'. Unauthorised absences must be reported to the DfE. The School Attendance Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences. Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason.

Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- Unapproved holiday.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice Guidance provided by the DfE. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or must pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue. Astwood Bank Primary values the support of parents in helping to maintain high standards of attendance.

Punctuality

- Supervised children may enter the school grounds between 8.40 and 8.50, however no child should be on school property before this time.
- Children should be in class for morning register at 8.50 and it is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are important in setting up the rest of the day.
- Late arrivals (after 9:00am) should enter school via the office to be registered.
- If a child misses the beginning of school their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child.
- The school will let parents know if there are concerns about a child's punctuality.

Term Time Leave of Absence

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Here are some examples that the DfE give of exceptional circumstances:

- For the service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during a crisis.
- For religious reasons.
- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill.
- There may have been a significant trauma in the family recently and the head teacher might consider that an immediate holiday might enable the child to better deal with the situation.

Leave of absence is granted at the discretion of the Head Teacher under the direction of the school governors. Therefore, a parent wishing to apply for leave of absence for term-time will need to fill in an application form well in advance and before booking. The Request for Absence form is available on the

school website. Full disclosure of reasons must be submitted. Any holiday not granted will be recorded as unauthorised absence should this leave be taken.

Leavers (including those leaving for middle school)

If your child is leaving before they reach the end of Year 4, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including the date of move, new address or at least the town they will be moving to.
- Confirm the new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving (a form is available at the school office).
- Confirm the school has the most current contact details.
- Communicate the current school's details to the new school so that the new school can easily make contact and begin transfer of records.
- Let the school know when the move has taken place.

If parents do not provide this information their child will be deemed missing and the Local Authority has a duty to search for them using Children's Services (previously called social services), the Police and other agencies to try and locate your child.

Monitoring Arrangements (the involvement of governors and school leaders)

The local governing body and senior leaders work together to monitor attendance figures for the school. The headteacher is responsible for reporting attendance to the governing body at full governing body meetings, and the governing body plays an active role in promoting attendance. This includes holding the headteacher to account for implementation of the attendance policy. The headteacher and senior leaders are responsible for implementing the attendance policy.

With support from the school office team, they also monitor attendance figures closely to study patterns and trends. This analysis ensures that leaders are aware of any safeguarding risks that may arise due to the absence of a child. The school acknowledges that studying patterns in attendance could give rise to discussions with special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads. This data is shared with the safeguarding link governor as part of their frequent monitoring visits. Attendance data is collected via the school's MIS (ScholarPack). This data is closely monitored daily, with a weekly report being sent to the headteacher. The office team are responsible for keeping school leaders informed about poor attendance, and whether a child's attendance falls short of the lowest threshold of 90%.

If attendance does reach this threshold, the headteacher will communicate directly with the parents and work towards improving attendance. If attendance does not improve, the headteacher will involve the services of the local authority. The school will work closely with the local authority to communicate poor attendance and any children missing in education. The school refers to key Government documents.

[Children Missing in Education](#). [Working Closely to Improve School Attendance](#).

Understanding Possible Barriers to Attendance

Astwood Bank Primary School works with parents to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of school, the school will work with parents to access support. This includes seeking support from outside agencies. The school also recognises that for some children, individual needs may lead to the school working closely with parents to make reasonable adjustments and ensure everything is being done to reach an acceptable level of attendance.