



Akaal  
Primary School

# Attendance Policy



**Reviewed by: Education, Standards & Pupil Welfare Committee, June 2021**

**Approved by: Education, Standards & Pupil Welfare Committee, September 2021**

**Revised by: Education, Standards & Pupil Welfare Committee March 2023 to  
incorporate updated DfE guidance.**

**Next Review Date: June 2024**

# Akaal Primary School: Attendance Policy

## Introduction

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address identifying patterns of absence

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. We expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school. Leaders will work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained through identifying and removing any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships, and working together to put the right support in place. One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

We encourage children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governing Board and the Headteacher, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at school. Our practices to maximise this will involve close interaction with our efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium and the appropriate use of external agencies.

## Attendance and pupil Support Service

Akaal Primary School will buy in services from Derby City Council's **Education Welfare Service** to deliver case work and to issue penalty notices.

## Parental Responsibility

We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their child/ren of compulsory age attend regularly.

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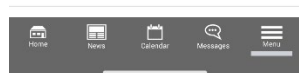
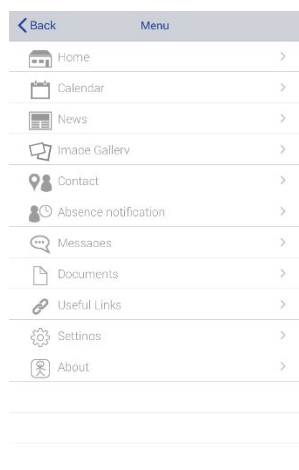
Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk. The school will share the attendance percentage with parents at each parent consultation meeting and more frequently where there are concerns. It is the **parents' responsibility** to contact the school on the **first day** their child is absent. This is a **safeguarding matter** so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive from 8:25 (by 8.30 am) when the doors are open and children go to class. All pupils who **arrive late must report to the school office** where they are registered, their meal requirements noted and the reason for lateness is recorded.

### Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school **before 8.45am** on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. This can be done by telephoning the school, sending an email or using the 'Absence notification' function on mySchoolApp.

- 01332 499011
- Laura Hill [<L.Hill@akaaalprimaryschool.org>](mailto:L.Hill@akaaalprimaryschool.org)



When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if **no message** has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- Every effort should be made to arrange **medical appointments outside school hours**.
- An **appointment card or verification** by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required.

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- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be **returned to school directly** after the appointment.
- d) If your child is absent due to **vomiting**, they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
- e) For **more than three days of absence** the school requires a **written** explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- f) **Medical certificates** are required for absence **greater than five days**.

### The Role of the School Staff

**The Governing Board and the Headteacher have overall responsibility for attendance.** The Headteacher, Zoë Parkes, is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored weekly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

### The Role of the Governing Board

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and practices
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance

### **Attendance Administration: Miss L Hill**

It is the responsibility of the school attendance administrator to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence and a reason obtained
- Where it is not possible to make contact, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is recorded as unauthorised
- The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register

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Parents and pupils who have queries about attendance on a day-to-day basis should contact Miss L Hill. Queries regarding more detailed support on attendance should be directed to the Headteacher.

### National Expectations for Attendance

- 96%+      **Excellent** – Well done! This will help all aspects of your child’s progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
- 94 - 95%      **Average** – Strive to build on this. Work with school to continue to achieve full attendance and move to 96%+
- 90 - 93%      **Poor** – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School will contact you directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance.
- Below 90%      **Unacceptable** – Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child’s learning. A meeting between home and school will be called to share support strategies and to set up an improvement plan. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Attendance Service - Education Welfare Officer [EWO]. The referral advises the EWO why the child is being referred and the information provided includes the child’s attendance summary. A Penalty Notice is considered where absence is not authorised.

The school is required to report its pupil attendance data to the EWO every half term.

**Non-attendance** is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that **no one standard response will be appropriate in every case**. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child’s attendance.
- b) Prior to the engagement of the EWO, the school may telephone the parents, and in the absence of a positive response, attempt to make contact by other means, including writing to them, clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils’ absence. Parents may also be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

### Children Missing Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Headteacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered, accepted, and the child is in attendance.

Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll but will be reported to the local authority Attendance Service once the school has failed, after

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reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil and their family. The school will then classify the child as “missing” and the appropriate policy will be followed from this point.

### Lateness

The class register is taken at 8.30am and at the start of the afternoon session at 1.15pm. Pupils arriving **after these times** must **report to reception** where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as **late** before registration has closed (Code ‘L’). The register **will close at 8.45am and 1.30pm**. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code ‘U’). This national code counts as an **unauthorised absence**.

### Home Education

Where parents express a preference to home educate their child, they must inform the Headteacher in writing that they are removing the child to be home-educated. The school will advise Derby City Council’s Admissions Team accordingly.

### Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the reason for each absence is always required.

#### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

#### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

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

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Holidays not agreed

The School reserves the right to remove a child from the roll of pupils where unauthorised absences exceed 20 days

### Authorising Absence

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Only the **Headteacher** can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

**Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.** The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that **will not** be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness eg poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness [alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school – emergencies excepted]
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip

### **Persistent Absence/Lateness**

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at **their previous school**, there will be a **pre-start attendance meeting** held and targets for attendance will be set.

Attendance meetings will be set up for any child whose attendance **becomes a concern** to decide on a plan to improve attendance. **Where there is no improvement, the school will involve the services of Education Welfare**

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Education Welfare Service is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **MUST** be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

### **Serious attendance concerns**

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school must consider the following in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service:

- Home visits
- Multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies eg Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

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### Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued by the Education Welfare Service in accordance with their Code of Conduct.

- The EWS issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 42 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

### Leave of Absence

Time off school for family holidays **will not normally be authorised**. Schools have the discretion, in **exceptional circumstances** to authorise a leave of absence.

The school strongly discourages families from taking their children out of school during term time. There is a clear impact on attainment and progress when children miss school for any length of time. The school will not authorise (and may fine) families who take holidays in term time simply to save money. Parents planning a holiday which may take their child out of school, for any number of days, must make the request in writing using an **Absence Request** form which is available on the website and from the office. All requests will be carefully considered but will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Where such a request is declined, a letter is issued to each parent notifying them of the decision and offering a meeting with the Headteacher to explain the reason for this.

We do, however, accept that visits to see family overseas are important. Our school holiday pattern includes a two-week break in both **October** and **February**, when trips to destinations like India are more likely, and it is expected that travel plans will take into account the existing school closure periods.

Applications for **Leave of Absence** where dates can be known ahead **MUST** be made at least **2 weeks in advance of the requested date**.

Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached on behalf of the Governing Board. Each case will be judged on its own merits. **The decision is usually final**. Once the decision to **not authorise** the leave is taken, it **cannot normally be authorised retrospectively**.



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If the absence is not authorised but the child is absent from school, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Holiday Absence**

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the LA Education Welfare Service Code of conduct

- The Attendance Service issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)
- If Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 42 days of issue, the EWS may instigate court proceedings

### **Rewards for Positive Attendance**

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured. However, as part of our positive promotion strategies to improve attendance there is a reward structure to praise children who achieve 100 % attendance.

The school year is split into 4 equal sections. 100% attendance in period 1 would result in the child receiving a **Bronze Attendance** certificate and matching badge.

100% attendance in period 2 = **Silver Award**

100% attendance in period 3 = **Gold Award**

100% attendance in period 4 = the **Special Star Award** and an after school trip to somewhere like Rollerworld.

However, if a child does not attain 100% in the first period, but then goes on to do so in the second period, it is then that they will receive their Bronze Award.

This reward structure is reset at the start of each school year.

Attendance awards are presented at the end of each period, in a whole school assembly, where parents are invited.

### **Individual Incentives**

Where additional positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance. Individual sticker rewards are sometimes employed as an additional incentive where appropriate; these are designed according to the child's particular need.

### **Publicising this Policy**

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A copy of this Policy is available on the School's website. It is issued with initial information to parents / carers when their children join the school. All parents / carers are issued with a copy at the beginning of each new school year.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed according to the schedule for policy review. We are committed to equal opportunities for all, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability or religion. We will monitor the impact of this.