



Aston Hall  
Junior & Infant School

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**ASTON HALL  
JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL**  
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**HEADTEACHER:** Mr S Holmes



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **Our Ethos is:**

Aston Hall Junior and Infant School is committed to the continuous raising of progress and achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the learning opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good and better, punctual 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 termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. The Governors, Headteacher and Staff, in partnership with parents and carers, have a duty to promote full attendance.

Full attendance is essential to the all-around development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law.

### **Our targets are:**

Maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 96%. We would like to aspirationally target 97% attendance as we believe our children enjoy their learning to its fullest in our setting.

### **Parental Responsibility:**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time.. Poor attendance undermines their education and can put pupils at risk of educational under-achievement and encourage anti-social behaviour.

### **What is absence?**

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines “**Absence**” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

Attendance is further broken down into two elements:

#### An “**unauthorised absence**” as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays. –
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

#### An “**authorised absence**” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

School Leadership is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified. Where there is continued sickness, schools can request medical evidence, e.g. Appointment Card/Prescription) before authorising further absence and schools can make a referral to the School Nurse. Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

#### **How to report absences:**

- 1) Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence and each day thereafter, preferably by 9am.
- 2) Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office.
- 3) A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. If no contact can be made, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- 4) If no contact can be made with home, members of the school leadership team will make personal enquiries at the child's registered address to offer support and ensure the welfare of the child. Please ensure your contact details are up-to-date if they have changed.
- 5) The above step will be repeated on Day 2 and further steps in-line with our school's attendance handbook and safeguarding policies will be followed.

#### **Holidays in Term Time:**

Holidays taken 'during term time' are never authorised (except in 'exceptional circumstances'). The Law (Government) has made it clear that Head Teachers are NOT to authorise absence for any holidays during term time, except under 'exceptional circumstances' which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This area of policy follows local LA guidance and Code of Conduct material issued from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2018 (reviewed September 2022), which is further based on DfE guidance around attendance in schools. The LA code of conduct can be found here: <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3098/code-of-conduct-september-2022>

If you feel there are 'exceptional circumstances' why your child needs to be absent from school during term time, you should apply, in advance, by writing to the school explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting the 'leave of absence'. If the school refuses a request for 'leave of absence' and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence' and noted in the child's attendance record.

#### **How to apply for leave:**

- 1) Complete the online form on our website here: <http://tiny.cc/1xrtxz> or ask for a leave of absence request form from the main office.
- 2) Complete the form and return as soon as possible, preferably 4 weeks before the requested leave.

The flow chart on the next page explains and clarifies the school's response to leave of absence requests and outlines the response that will be made at each stage of the process. This guidance has been made using the legislation from the Local Authority, which has been fully accepted by the Wickersley Partnership Trust

School receives an application for a 'Leave Of Absence during term time. The request will be considered by the Head teacher and parents/carers notified in due course.

**Letter A: EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The Leave of Absence is granted, by the Head teacher, due to the 'exceptional circumstances' of the request. NB: Each request is considered on a case by case basis.

**Letter B: LOA LESS THAN FIVE DAYS**

The Leave of Absence request is unauthorised by the school but NO further action is taken. The request is for FIVE school days of less.

**Letter C: LOA UP TO TEN DAYS**

The Leave of Absence request is unauthorised by the school BUT school will need to consider the total number of unauthorised sessions following the child's return back to school (after the holiday period) and if going back 12 months their attendance is below 95.3% (national combined average) school may well issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a FPN has already been issued within 2 years, the LA may take legal action via the magistrates court as a 2<sup>nd</sup> FPN cannot be issued.

**Letter D: LOA IS TEN DAYS OR MORE.**

The Leave of Absence request is unauthorised by the school AND because the total number of unauthorised sessions, due to the holiday period, automatically takes a child's attendance below 95.3% (national combined average) a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. If a FPN has already been issued within 2 years, the LA may take legal actions via the magistrates court as a 2<sup>nd</sup> FPN cannot be issued.

**NB: Fixed Penalty Notices are £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. This rises to £120 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.**