



Attendance Policy

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Avanti Fields School | Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Avanti Fields School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based on the belief that, only by attending school regularly and punctually, young people are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High achievement and attainment depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils/students, parents and carers, staff and SSC at Avanti Fields School have a responsibility for ensuring good attendance and have important roles to play.

1.3 For pupils/students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Why regular attendance is so important

2. Learning

2.1 Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil/student absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others.

3.2 Ensuring regular attendance at the Academy is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer and permitting absence from the School without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

3. Safeguarding

3.1 A learner may be at risk of harm if they do not attend School regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for learners encompasses:

- Attendance;
- Behaviour management;
- Health and Safety;
- Access to the Curriculum;
- Anti-bullying.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

4. The Law relating to attendance

4.1 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states the "the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and;
- (b) To any special educational needs, he / she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

5. The Law relating to safeguarding

5.1 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

6. Absence Procedures

Parents/Carers

6.1 If your child is absent you must:

- contact the School as soon as possible on the first day of absence, at the latest by 08:15am;
- Send a note on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – this is required, even if you have contacted us via telephone

The School

6.2 If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
- We may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if the attendance falls below **90%**. The EWO may consider issuing a Penalty Notice for Non-School Attendance.

7. Telephone numbers

7.1 There are times when we need to contact parents/carers, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we do not then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

9. Managing Lateness – Guidance for parents

9.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable.

9.2 The School day starts at **8.30am** and we expect all students to be in lessons at that time. Students who arrive after that time will receive a late mark.

9.3 If a pupil/student has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the School to resolve the problem, but parents can approach the School at any time if they are having problems getting a pupil/student to the School on time.

10. Understanding types of absence:

10.1 Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

10.2 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

10.3 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional/unavoidable circumstance.

10.4 This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

10.5 Whilst any child may be absent from School because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and increases the problem.

11. Leave of Absence – Guidance for parents/carers

11.1 Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstances in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not allowing absence in School time.

11.2 Request of absence forms for leave are available from the school office. The School will consider the request and respond in writing with a decision.

11.3 There is **no** automatic entitlement in law for time off in school time, to go on holiday.

11.4 All applications for leave of absence must be made **4 weeks in advance**. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the School will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of absence.

11.5 It is important that parents/carers understand that we will **only** authorise such absences in exceptional **circumstances**.

11.6 Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the School and/or different from that agreed by the School, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions, such as a Penalty Notice.

12. Procedures relating to absences during School Term Time

12.1 When there is a period of unauthorised leave of absence, and no exceptional circumstances have been given and the leave of absence has not been authorised by the school. The period of absence requested is recorded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority.

12.2 Where it is believed that a pupil/student has left the area and enquires have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil/student, the School will inform the Local Authority and the student could be taken off roll after 20 days.

13 Persistent Absence (PA)

13.1 A student becomes a "persistent absentee" when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the parent/carer's utmost support and co-operation to tackle this.

13.2 At Avanti Fields School we monitor all absences rigorously. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence (PA) mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

13.3 PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects achievement and attainment.

13.4 All PA, or potential PA cases are referred to our Education Welfare Officer.

13.5 Parents/Carers of PA pupil/students will need to provide additional medical evidence in the form of:

- Medical prescriptions / Medication;
- A letter from a Medical Professional.

13.6 For pupils/students who have a long term medical condition, parents/carers will need to keep the School updated with regular medical guidance.

14. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the Academy:

14.1 A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met:

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (a maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive days (4 consecutive sessions);
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above;
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Students/Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from the School (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices, please refer to the **Leicester City Council website**.

15. Payment of Penalty Notices:

15.1 Details of arrangements for the payment of penalties will be detailed on the Penalty Notice. Penalties should be paid in full, in one instalment, to the Local Authority and are retained to cover costs of issuing, enforcing or prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

15.2 The penalty is £120 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, but reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, as set out in The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

15.3 If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority, in accordance with the Department of Education, must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.

15.4 Prosecution is for the offence to which it relates rather than for non-payment of the Penalty Notice.

15.5 The decision to prosecute ultimately lies with the Local Authority, who will consider whether the prosecution is in the Public Interest.

16. Deletions from Register

16.1 Under Section 8 (1) (h), (i), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on 20th day of absence, the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

16.2 This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) – that he/she/they will have continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and:

- At no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);
- The proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil/s is/are unable to attend school by reason on sickness or exceptional cause.