



**Abbas and Templecombe
Church of England Primary School**
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Attendance Policy

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Abbas and Templecombe Primary School values good attendance. As a school, it is committed to providing the best possible education for each child, which will be best achieved when all children have good attendance. If a child is absent or late for school, they will miss out on information given by the teacher. They will also miss out on assemblies, which are important gatherings for sharing information, celebrating success and reinforcing our values. Children will fall behind with their work, not make the progress they should and therefore not develop to their full potential. Ultimately, prospective employers are not impressed with young people who have a poor school attendance record.

Children are required to be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is legitimate. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent (the Education Act 1996, section 444). Children arriving after registration are marked with a U code, this represents an unauthorised absence.

Children can sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with irregular attendance are best overcome between the school, the parents and the child. If a 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 may make things worse.

Attendance is recorded daily, with each school day having two sessions which every child is required to attend. The school has the legal responsibility to record these sessions accurately, and therefore it is the responsibility of the school to investigate any absences in order to record them accurately. Any absence must be authorised by the school (not by the parents) or it is unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other legitimate cause. However in some cases medical evidence may

be requested in order to authorise absences for medical reasons. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark in the register
- Holidays in term time

Holiday Absence

Parents should be aware that schools can no longer authorise holidays in term time unless there are “exceptional” circumstances. Should parents wish to request such leave, the request must be made to the Headteacher in writing. All requests will need to be discussed on an individual basis, and any authorisation is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Should the school decide not to grant term-time leave and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Under legislation, this may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice, which will result in a fine of £60 per parent per child.

Poor Attendance

Abbas and Templecombe Primary School requires that attendance is made a priority for all children. In cases where a child has poor attendance, the parent(s) will be contacted by the school and every effort will be made to resolve the issues. If issues are not resolved and unauthorised absences occur, the school may request the issue of a Penalty Notice in accordance with statutory guidance (see above).

Parents are also expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority’s Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed, this officer can use legal action to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment upon conviction.

Purpose

- To maximise learning
- To maximise attendance rates
- To acquaint parents with their responsibility for ensuring regular attendance and consistency between school and home expectations of behaviour
- To set the culture that unjustified absence and poor behaviour are not tolerated
- To develop self-discipline, raising individual standards in attendance
- To support children for whom attendance issues are hindering inclusion
- The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Guidelines

- Parents and the school need to see themselves in partnership in the education of their children with respect to their attendance.

- Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should prioritise attendance and ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired, equipped and in a condition to learn.
- There will be close communication which ensures that the appropriate staff, leadership team and outside agencies have relevant children's information at all times.
- Parents will be encouraged to sign the Home School Agreement contract which reinforces the need for high levels of co-operation and attendance.
- Additional support will be provided for children with more challenging attendance difficulties.

Procedures

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

- Attendance registers are required by law to be called twice a day; once at the commencement of the morning session and once at the commencement of the afternoon session. Registers close at 9:05am and 1:05pm. Late arrival at any time must be supported with a reason when children are signed in at the school office.
- Arrival after registers have closed will initially be recorded as unauthorised; however all circumstances will be considered by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis.
- Procedures for the marking of the registers and associated administration along with the agreed rewards and sanctions are outlined in the Staff Handbook.
- Teachers are to maintain an accurate attendance register ensuring where possible all absences are authorised by parental notification.
- The school office will contact parents when a child is absent and the school has not been informed. The absence will be verified either in person at the school office or via a telephone conversation. In some cases families may be asked to produce medical evidence for absences due to illness.
- Only the school, through the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher (covering in the absence of the Headteacher), can grant leave of absence for children of compulsory school age.
- On occasions the police, along with the EAO, will undertake "truancy sweeps".
- The school operates a tracking system monitoring attendance.

Complaints

If a parent or carer feels that this policy has not been applied appropriately they should refer to the school's complaints policy and follow the steps contained within.