

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Updated: September 2015

Review Date: March 2017

Introduction

Adeyfield School is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Principles

- Attendance is strongly linked to achievement. Good attendance is therefore necessary if students are to fulfil their academic and social potential at Adeyfield School.
- Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of all staff, students and parents.
- For high levels of attendance to be achieved good relationships are needed between home and school.
- The creation of a school environment where students are safe, achieve, and enjoy coming are vital if attendance is to improve.
- Strategies for responding to both excellent and poor rates of attendance should be applied fairly and consistently to all students regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, disability and religion.
- Wherever possible there should be early intervention to respond positively with high levels of attendance and appropriately with low levels of attendance. This intervention will involve working with external agencies if appropriate.

Definition of terms

Authorised absence – It is the decision of the school's attendance team to determine whether a student's absence is authorised or not. Authorised absence is absence that the school has approved. The school may approve absence for any reason that it deems appropriate.

Unauthorised absence – This relates to student absence that the school has decided not to approve. Absence is also unauthorised if a reason for student absence is not provided to the school by parents.

Persistent absence (P/A)- A persistent absentee is defined as having an overall absence of 10% or more of possible sessions during each half term. (This equates to 3½ missed school days per half term.)

Roles and Responsibilities

- Governors will establish an attendance and punctuality policy in consultation with the Headteacher, staff, students and parents. Governors will also work with the school to set an attendance target for each academic year. They will ensure that it is communicated to all stakeholders and that it is applied fairly and consistently. They will also ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed

- The Headteacher is responsible for the day to day implementation and management of the policy and procedures
- All staff will support students to ensure they attend regularly and will address problems that may lead to non-attendance. All staff will recognise and reward good attendance. Staff will take registers twice daily and in all lessons. They will also record incidents of lateness. Staff will also share with students their attendance figures and work with them to improve them during tutor time and tutor interviews
- Some staff will contact parents on the first day of absence and record reasons for absence if a phone call is not received. Selected staff will also monitor attendance figures on a weekly, fortnightly and half term basis and share any concerns with relevant staff, students, external agencies, including the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) and parents
- The Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) will support the school in implementing procedures to raise the attendance of students. The AIO will also work with the school, families and individual students whose attendance is a concern in order to ensure they attend school regularly. If this intervention and support does not lead to sufficient improvement in the student's attendance the school will consider issuing parents a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) in line with guidelines issued to the school by Hertfordshire County Council
- It remains the legal responsibility of a parent or carer to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and on time.
- The school expects parents or carers to inform the school if their child is unable to attend for any reason on each day of absence.
- The school will work with the parents, carers and other agencies to address any issues leading to non-attendance at school.
- We request the parents or carers endeavour to avoid having medical appointments during school hours.
- It is the responsibility of parents or carers to ensure that their child(ren) arrive at school appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- Students will attend school regularly and on time. If a student is late then a same day sanction will be put in place.
- Once in school students will attend all lessons on time and they will remain on the school site.
- Students will be aware of their attendance figures and should strive to improve it.

Holidays in term time

The school actively discourages parents or carers from taking holidays during term time. If a parent or carer feels that a holiday in term time is unavoidable (eg family wedding or bereavement) a written request must be submitted to the Headteacher; the parent or carer will have a meeting arranged with the Headteacher to discuss the request.

Each case will then be considered by the Headteacher on an individual basis and parents or carers will receive a written response to their request.

If due to a holiday in term time a student's absence falls below the 10% Persistent Absence threshold, the school can authorise the issuing of a fixed penalty notice and make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer.

Attendance

Students will be placed into four groups based on their attendance. These groups are:

- Excellent Attendance: Greater than 97%
- Attendance monitored: 96 – 95%
- Poor Attendance: 94-90%
- Persistent Absence: 90% or less

Attendance Procedures (Pastoral)

The following procedures have been put in place to help students achieve the best attendance possible and deter students from becoming persistently absent.

- First day response call home made by one of the attendance team
- Key Stage Leaders/2i/c Key Stage to receive weekly overviews of attendance and absence (both authorised and unauthorised) with actions, outcomes and impact
- Attendance to be a standing item on Key Stage Leaders fortnightly meetings with actions and impact minuted. Some cases may be handed over to attendance team where early intervention of Form Tutor and Head of Key Stage have not been successful and absence looks as if it is a problem
- Attendance to continue to be a standing item on the Pastoral Leaders' Group agenda but the focus needs to be on what has been done, impact and ideas to improve attendance as all stakeholders should have already had key data and been acting upon it
- Form Tutors are to make attendance a focus of tutor interviews and tutor time
- Intervention from school attendance worker may be deemed necessary if attendance continues to drop
- Work with families and outside agencies including 'Thriving Families', 'Link Family Services' and 'ESTMA' if absence persists is to be co-ordinated and documented by IEN Team with AIO involvement if absence to school becomes 'persistent'
- Weekly and half termly analysis of attendance, identifying vulnerable students including what has been done to secure good attendance and impact is to be documented and acted upon swiftly
- Letters can be sent home at various points to flag up importance of good attendance but these must be personalised to the individual and a response from a parent recorded if there is one
- Fixed Penalty Notices – authorised by the Headteacher upon the recommendation of AIO
- Prosecution by AIO
- Good attendance to be rewarded by Heads of Key Stage half termly in year assemblies

Evidence as to what has been done needs to be maintained by all stakeholders - This should demonstrate what has been done? What has been the impact? How do we know?

Attendance Procedures (Curriculum)

It is incumbent on every class teacher to promote good and punctual attendance to class and to put in place the appropriate sanctions for persistent lateness to lessons. To support this the following should/will occur.

- Class teachers should greet students at the door on time
- Class teachers should ensure that corridors are clear and promote a punctual start to the lesson

- Lateness to class should be challenged by class teachers and followed up in an appropriate way. How many minutes late a student is must be recorded on SIMS
- Persistent lateness should result in an appropriate sanction and contact with parents and discussion with students
- Pastoral team to deal with patterns of non-attendance to class alongside attendance team