



# **Children Absent from Education and Attendance Policy**

## **ELIS MURCIA**

### **Policy Statement**

## Children Absent from Education and Attendance Policy

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The school maintains Attendance Registers for all pupils. The school will work in a collaborative way with external agencies, in accordance with the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach taken to:

- Recording attendance information on a daily basis;
- Recording information at the point a pupil leaves the school; and
- Managing a situation when a pupil is deemed absent from education.

### Content

1. Attendance
2. Children Absent from/or Missing in Education
3. Procedures for Children Absent from/or Missing in Education
4. Safeguarding
5. Appendix 1 Attendance Guidance for Parents

## 1 Attendance

### 1.1 Introduction

It is important that staff, parents and pupils are familiar with this policy. Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally.

Missing learning time through having persistent/prolonged absence or erratic attendance leaves children vulnerable to falling behind in their learning and it is well known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. Furthermore, poor attendance can also impact on a child's social and emotional development. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents, and the child, beginning from the Early Years

### 1.2 The legal framework

Legislation specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs; either by regular school attendance or home education.

The school is required to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers.

### 1.3 Link between attendance and achievement

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement, as well as a strong link between truancy and antisocial behaviour.

### 1.4 Parent/carer(s) responsibilities

- Encourage regular and sustained attendance, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives punctually, prepared for learning.
- Provide clear reasons for any absence which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the school day.
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time.

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- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter.

### **1.5 School responsibilities**

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including addressing persistent absence or prolonged absence.
- Work to ensure every pupil has good attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to.
- Act early to address patterns of absence to prevent persistent and prolonged absence.
- Encourage parents to ensure their child attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually.
- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities.

We achieve this in the following ways:

- Teachers/class tutors must take a register at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon;
- Those taking the register must mark all children not present by the designated time, taking account of absence notes;
- Follow up un-notified first day absence with a telephone call to the parent/carer(s);
- Monitor attendance and lateness and implement strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance such as year groups or vulnerable children, as required, including the use of formal letters home;
- Report on patterns of attendance at Governance Meetings to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils;
- Specifically monitor any persistent or prolonged absence and address any concerns at an early stage with parents/carers:
- Proper use of the school codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, including preservation of the entries on both the Admissions and Attendance Registers for a period of three years after it was made;
- Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence;
- Close liaison and discussion with the school's Child Protection and Wellbeing Coordinator to identify children causing concern, including talking to children and parents regarding any unsatisfactory attendance to find out the reason and offer support;
- Close liaison and discussion with the Child Protection and Wellbeing Coordinator where there are concerns about children having prolonged absence without parental response, especially where there have been safeguarding concerns. See Section 2 of this document;
- Implementing any agreed improvement strategies, such as referral to children's social services in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures; and
- Provide parent/carer(s) with the timings of the school day and the calendar via the school website and any other usual method such as the school newsletter, in advance.

### **1.6 Satisfactory attendance**

Our school considers satisfactory attendance to be that above 95%.

### **1.7 Persistent absentees**

Persistent absentees are pupils with attendance below 90% generally within a given period and usually a month. The school will contact the parents/carers if their child's attendance approaches this threshold. If attendance does not improve, the school may contact the local authority in accordance with local procedures.

### 1.8 Late arrival

It is essential that, if a pupil arrives late, they should sign in at the school office so our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

### 1.9 Leaving school early during the day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by their known parent/carer for a specified reason;. If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent is required to collect them for a medical appointment, they are required to sign out at the School Office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents should notify the school in advance.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the school site during the school day unless accompanied by staff members (agreed by the Headteacher) to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture.

### 1.10 Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)

- Schools, not parents, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Head. The Head is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday or a leisure activity.
- Valid reasons for absence include illness, routine or emergency medical and dental appointments, observing a religious holiday, bereavement. These must be communicated to the school in writing and be duly authorised.
- We ask that parents make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for ill health reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and, importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.
- An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the prior permission of the Head.

### 1.11 Monitoring and review arrangements

Attendance rates are reported regularly to the Cognita Board. Proprietorial Governors report on pupil attendance, as well as any patterns or trends of persistent absence from school. Representatives of the Proprietor scrutinise Admissions and Attendance Registers for compliance and safeguarding purposes.

## 2 **Children Absent and/or Missing from Education**

### 2.1 Children missing from education are:

- Children who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.
- Children missing from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

### 2.2 Children Absent from Education

Often children can be persistently absent from school or have prolonged absences. Of course, there may be a satisfactory reason for their absence, most often medical, for which this is needed, for example, the child is having operations/treatments.

However, on other occasions, the child is frequently absent but there does not appear to be a satisfactory reason. This is different from a child being a 'child missing in education' (as described above) but it is still a concern.

As stated above, it is mandatory that children of a compulsory age attend school, but of most importance, frequent absences impact on a child's development across all domains, not purely cognitive.

If a child's absence continues despite interventions to identify and address the underlying cause with both the child and parents, then consideration may be given to seeking advice from social services in order to support the family.

## 3 Procedures for Children Absent from Education and Children Missing in Education

- If a new pupil fails to attend on at the beginning of first day of the agreed or notified Admissions date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. Schools must monitor all pupils' attendance through their daily register.
- Schools must address poor or irregular attendance with both parents and, where appropriate, with the pupil.
- Schools should follow their local authority guidance in terms of the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the school may check with relatives, neighbours, landlords and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social services (and the police if appropriate). This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds (and medical evidence) to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. In these situations, where it is unknown why the child is not attending school, and the parents are not responding to school communication, consideration may be given to seeking advice from social services.
- Home Education: Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove their child from school with a view to educating at home, the school will seek guidance from their local education inspectorate.

## 4. Safeguarding

- The school has a safeguarding duty in respect of its pupils, and as part of this will investigate any unexplained, persistent or prolonged absences. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation.
- It is important that the school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social services and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

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- Where there are safeguarding concerns about any child's absence; persistent absence; prolonged absence; or unexplained absence, the school will always talk to the child and parents about their concerns. They will also follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which includes referring to social services as appropriate.
- If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the school will inform the Police.
- Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, the school will take action without delay.

## **Appendix 1 – Attendance Guidance for Parents**

**Note – this section is intended to be used by schools to share with parents in whatever form is most appropriate.**

### **Introduction**

Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years.

### **The legal framework**

Legislation in Spain specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school.

The school is required to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers.

### **Parent/carer(s) responsibilities**

- Encourage regular and punctual attendance, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities.
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- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter.

### **School responsibilities**

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- Work to ensure every pupil has good attendance so he/she can access the education he/she is entitled to.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
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### **Late arrival**

It is essential that, if a pupil arrives late, they sign in at the school office so that our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

### **Leaving school early during the day**

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff or their known parent/carer; or to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture.

If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent is required to collect them for a medical appointment, they are required to sign out at the school office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents should notify the school in advance.

### **Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)**

Schools, not parents, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Head. The Head is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

We ask that parents make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for ill health reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the Head in advance.

### **Satisfactory attendance**

Our school considers satisfactory attendance to be above 95%. The school will contact the parent/carer(s) if there are attendance concerns. If attendance does not improve, the school will contact the local authority in accordance with local authority procedures.



## Children Absent from Education and Attendance Policy

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### Version control:

<b>Ownership and consultation</b>	
Document Sponsor	European Director of Education
Document Author / Reviewer	ADE Regional Safeguarding Lead
Consultation & Specialist Advice	.
<b>Document application and publication</b>	
England	No
Wales	No
Spain	Yes
Switzerland	No
Italy	No
<b>Version control</b>	
Current Review Date	September 2023
Next Review Date	September 2024
<b>Related documentation</b>	
Related documentation	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Applications and Admissions Policy