

Pupil Attendance Policy

This policy applies to all pupils and staff of Abbot's Hill, including EYFS.

General

Parents or guardians of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise. (**Education Act 1996**).

The **Act**, together with the **Pupil Registration Regulations**, requires the school to keep an attendance register which is currently kept electronically.

The school is registered with the Information Commissioner under the **Data Protection Act 1998**.

Aim

The school is committed to a positive policy of encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. The school will work with parents and pupils to secure this aim.

The other purpose of this Attendance Policy is to ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that pupils who should be attending the school have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the school.

Taking the Attendance Register

In the Nursery children are signed in and out by a staff member in the relevant Room using a paper register. Times of arrival and departure are recorded.

Electronic registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils from Reception to Year 11; they are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example, as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They also contribute to pupil's reports. For these reasons registers must be completed accurately and with attention to detail.

Pupils' of compulsory school age must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of this school to register ALL pupils (including those over and under compulsory school age).

The register must be updated twice daily at the beginning of the school day and after lunch. In addition all teaching staff must check that the pupils who should attend each lesson do so.

The register must record the following:

- whether the pupil is present, absent, or attending an approved off-site educational activity.

An 'approved educational activity' is defined as:

1. one taking place off the school premises;
2. approved by a person authorised by the Governors or the Headmistress;
3. supervised by a person approved by the Governors or Headmistress;

4. of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, or for a place in Further Education; and
5. Link Courses where pupils attend an FE college for part of their time, or franchised pupils receiving part of their education off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under school supervision (e.g. sick children being taught at home), or attending approved sporting activity:
 - a. When a pupil of compulsory school age is absent it must be marked as an 'authorised' or 'unauthorised' absence; and
 - b. the nature of the approved educational activity (for a pupil of compulsory school age).

Reference codes are:

Λ	Present
?	Unknown
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) i.e. Music
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not medical or dental etc. appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers close)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
U	Late (after registration has closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
Y	Enforced closure
#	School closed to pupils

Responsibilities

The Headmistress will:

- ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement this policy throughout the school.
- determine (in collaboration with the members of the SMT in both the Senior and Prep Schools) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested in writing, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made;
- notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence;
- initiate with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance;
- contact the local authority when absence reaches 2 consecutive weeks without a satisfactory explanation.

Deputy Head and Head of Prep School will:

- oversee the attendance arrangements;
- work with Heads of Year to ensure the efficient running of the system;
- make periodic checks of the registers to monitor pupil absence;
- make regular checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence;
- ensure that unaccounted for absences are followed up;
- deal with issues of inadequate registering;
- keep the Headmistress informed of the progress of the policy; and
- advise the Headmistress on any strategies that could be initiated or improved.

Form Tutors/Heads of Year/Class Teachers will:

- ensure that all pupil absences are noted and absence notes are received from parents;
- ensure that registers are completed accurately;
- make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering;
- make regular checks on absence notes;
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with;
- contact parents over pupil absences where appropriate;
- make reports to the Deputy Head/Head of Prep School on the efficiency of the system; and
- liaise with the Deputy Head/Head of Prep School over training needs.

Classroom Teachers will:

- check the attendance of pupils at their lessons; and
- inform the Head of Year/Head of Prep (as applicable) of the names of pupils who are absent without notification.

Pupils are required to: attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('Attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session);

Parents should:

- inform the school of their child's absence on the first day of non-attendance;
- provide an explanatory note on the day their child returns to school;
- request any planned absences well in advance by contacting the Deputy Head (Senior School pupils) or Head of Prep (Prep School pupils);

Office Staff/Nursery Staff (as applicable) will:

- contact the parents or carers on the initial day if a message, telephone call, email or note in writing explaining the pupil's/child's absence fails to be made.

Inspection

The Headmistress will ensure that the School Admission and Attendance Registers are available for inspection by the Reporting Inspector.

Holiday Leave

In exceptional circumstances and only following approval of the Headmistress may permission be granted for leave of absence for pupils to attend family holidays. Formal requests must be made to the Deputy Head or Head of Prep as applicable.

The application must be made by the parent (or person with parental responsibility) with whom the child normally resides, but the letter can be brought to the school by the pupil.

The Headmistress will not give leave automatically but will take into account:

- The age of the child;
- The time of the year proposed;
- The nature of the holiday;
- Parental wishes; and
- The views of the staff.

If the pupil still goes on a holiday which has not been approved by the school it counts as unauthorised absence.

The School will only agree to absences of more than 10 school days in any school year in exceptional circumstances.

Short Term Leave

The School can legally grant short term leave for family reasons. It is for the Headmistress to determine the reasonableness.

Where a pupil becomes pregnant, leave will be given of no more than 18 weeks after which the absence would be unauthorised. The school will do all it can to support the pupil remaining in school as long as possible.

Dental and medical appointments are valid reasons for missing registration and constitute authorised absence. If the pupil leaves for an appointment after registering, no absence needs to be recorded.

The School may, exceptionally, sanction limited absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made. The Headmistress will set a time limit for such absences in consultation with the Deputy Head/Head of Prep School.

Religious Observance

The school will treat absence as authorised when it is true to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

The school expects advance notice, since religious festivals are likely to be fixed well ahead.

The Headmistress will review each application reasonably, and in consultation with the Deputy Head/Head of Prep School, and the parents.

Lateness

For health and Safety reasons any pupil arriving late should enter school via the main entrance reporting to Main Reception or Prep School Office. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The pupil will then be sent to their classroom. All pupils must sign in using the late arrivals register.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken. For example, detention can be set.

Pupils leaving early for an authorised appointment should also be signed out at the School Reception in the Main House, the Prep School Office or directly from the child's room in the Nursery.

Taking a Pupil off the Attendance Register

The Headmistress will authorise the taking of a pupil's name off the register in accordance with the current Regulations and the Admissions Policy.

Signed

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Elizabeth Thomas

Headmistress