

Aspire Academy
Attendance Policy
September 2022



Our Ethos and Values

At Aspire our ethos is to develop the individual moulding independent learners and confident young minds.

We aspire to be a community founded upon mutual trust where everyone is loved and respected for who they are. We believe that in working together we can accomplish more than we could alone.

Values:

As an Alternative Provision Academy, our core values are empathy, courage and community:

- **Empathy** is essential to human life and lies at the heart of all successful relationships. Empathy is an unspoken language that we aim to teach and develop in others. In this way we develop self-awareness and depth of human engagement;
- **Courage** is a trait that needs to be developed in everyone. Life throws many challenges at us and we need to be prepared to face those challenges through developing deep personal reserves. We believe that developing individual strength and conviction enables students for the rest of their lives;
- We aim to be an **inclusive community**. Each person is needed, valued and important. When things go wrong we will forgive each other and make a fresh start. We will share what we have with those in need and try to treat others as we would like them to treat us.

Aims

As an Alternative Provision Academy, we aim to:

- Treat learners, staff and visitors with respect;
- Incorporate and promote the values behind the academy in all we do;
- Instil a sense of self-worth and value in every learner;
- Encourage learner participation in the planning and the running of our Academy wherever possible;
- Encourage emotional literacy as a way of interpreting the world around us;
- Encourage, challenge and support every person to achieve his or her potential.

Statement of Policy Review

The Board of Trustees has agreed that this policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis. This review will take into consideration all aspects of applicable legislation and advice current at the time of the review. The next 'Period of Review' will be **SEPTEMBER 2023**.

1. Statement of Policy

At Aspire Academy we believe that every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents/Carers and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance is seen as a crucial aspect of learning and that attendance rates are extremely high. We believe that good attendance should be rewarded and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

2. Responsibilities

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should work closely with Academy staff to overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance.

The Academy will encourage and value high attendance rates. The Academy will recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and will work in partnership with parents, the Education Welfare Service and other relevant services to deal with any issues that may present barriers to attendance. The Academy will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with students and their parents and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

3. Procedures

3.1. Registration

Registration will be carried out electronically at 9.00am in tutor bases and at 1.40 pm at the start of period 5. Students arriving after these times, but before registration closes at 9.30am and 2.05pm respectively, will be coded 'L' for late. Students that arrive after 9:30am will receive a 'U' code.

3.2. Absences

All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Should any explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised. (Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as shopping, day trips, birthdays and missing the bus).

Parents are advised to inform the Academy of any absence as soon as possible. The Academy will use first day response calling to request reasons for absence if none have been provided by 10am on the first day of absence. A written note of any such phone call or other communication

will be recorded by the attendance officer. On returning to the Academy the student should bring any supporting information for their absence (e.g. medical note, appointment letter). The tutor should initial and date the note and take it to the Attendance Office. A record will then be placed on the student's electronic file and will remain there until they leave the Academy.

Reasons for absence

Illness: genuine illness will result in an unauthorised absence. It should always be supported by contact from parents. Long term absence should be investigated and evidence supporting the illness will be sought, in the form of a medical certificate. If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time parents will be invited in to meet with a member of the Attendance Team and home visits / welfare checks will be regularly conducted.

If a student is ill while at the academy, the tutor should notify the attendance team and the SLOs as soon as possible. This ensures that parents are contacted and necessary arrangements made for the child to go home.

Caring for the family: the Principal will apply her discretion as to how this absence will be recorded. Children and young people should not be allowed to regularly take on responsibilities in the home at the expense of attending school. However, where a student has genuine and exceptional circumstances the academy will give consideration to authorising absence and providing Home Education until other arrangements can be made.

Family Bereavement: Aspire Academy will respond sensitively to absence requests. An agreed period of time will be agreed; if the student fails to return contact should be made on the first day of unauthorised absence.

Work Experience: If a student is found, during work experience, to have failed to attend, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If a student attends Work Experience as planned their attendance will be marked positively.

Appointments – medical and dental: We encourage parents/carers to arrange these appointments outside of school time. If this is unavoidable, students are expected to return to the academy immediately after the appointment. If a student fails to return from a morning appointment and misses the afternoon sessions, without adequate explanation, the afternoon session will be unauthorised.

Religious Festivals: students are allowed to leave for a day, set aside for religious observance. Parents/carers can apply for more than one day. If the student takes additional days that have not been agreed, this will be unauthorised.

3.3. Lateness

Students who arrive at the Academy after morning or afternoon registration has closed should sign in at with Attendance, their time of arrival and the reason for their lateness will be recorded. The EWO should regularly inspect the late register and analyse the data on the attendance report and lesson monitor and if necessary liaise with their tutors. Students who

arrive at the Academy late should not be admitted to class until they have signed in at the attendance office and explained the reasons for their lateness. This is important for health and safety reasons. If students are late to lessons without good cause they will receive a red slip.

3.4. Term-Time Holidays

Under new Government rules that came into effect on 1 September 2013 the Principal no longer has the discretion to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

All requests for holiday leave of absence within term time will be refused and classed as "unauthorised". It will only be in exceptional circumstances that this may be reviewed. E.g. a parent in the forces and no leave due during school holidays or extreme family crisis. The availability of cheaper holidays or a family wedding will not be considered exceptional circumstances.

A request must be made in advance in writing by the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Please be aware that there is every possibility that the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice for any unauthorised absence due to holidays.

4. Permission to leave during the academy day

No student may leave Aspire Academy during school hours, once a student has received their registration mark, unless permission is gained from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Every student needs to sign out with the Attendance Office as they leave the academy, during the day.

Students absent during lessons must report back to the attendance team and tutor if they return to the academy.

Students in years 7,8,9 and 10 are not allowed to leave the site at lunch time. Year 11 students, with written permission from parents/carers may do so.

5. Staff Roles

5.1. Tutor

The Tutor is seen as a key figure in promoting regular punctual attendance. The Tutor should;

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration;
- Carry out registration of students in the prescribed manner;
- Conduct close monitoring of am and pm registration;
- Have close liaison with parents/carers each morning to check that young people are on their way to the academy;
- Follow up any absent students swiftly, and without delay;

- Ensure that all notes from parents are passed to the attendance office;
- Monitor patterns of absence for individuals within the form group;
- Alert the Attendance Team when there is an attendance problem;
- Follow up any suspected internal truancy by checking with the attendance office or via SIMs.net;
- Offer praise to individual students whose attendance and/or punctuality improves.

5.2. **The Subject Teacher**

Subject teachers should:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual
- Promote positive attendance via praise
- Provide relevant work for students who have been detected internally truanting to do in detention.

5.3. **The Heads of Key stage**

Heads of Key stage are responsible for monitoring the attendance of the students in their respective key stage. They should:

- Induct new staff in the year team on attendance procedures;
- Monitor the performance of individual Tutor groups, following up with individual tutors instances where patterns of absenteeism are not being effectively addressed;
- Regularly put attendance on the agenda to be discussed during debrief;
- Ensure that contact is made with parents of poor attendees;
- Meet with the Education Welfare Officer on a weekly basis in order to discuss students who have not responded to the Academy's strategies.
- Follow up internal truancy with appropriate sanctions;
- Promote good attendance and punctuality through tutor time;

5.4. **Senior Leader**

- Set annual Academy attendances target with SLT.
- Ensure that whole-Academy attendance policy is implemented (and regularly reviewed);
- Ensure that the policy is communicated to students, staff, parents and governors;
- Ensure detailed attendance data is regularly collected and used to inform strategic planning on attendance matters;
- Report to governors on attendance matters.
- Monitor work done to manage attendance by Heads of key stages.

5.5. **EWO and Attendance Office**

- Process registers / Absence forms;
- Keep record of students signing out;
- Record telephone absences;
- Produce summary attendance data prior to meetings;
- Generate lists of attendance concerns / patterns on a termly basis for senior staff;
- Produce weekly Year Group attendance report, summarised by tutor group;
- Administer first day calling system;

- Administer first day home visits;
- Produce absence letters to parents;
- Liaise with Education Welfare;
- Highlight problems to staff when necessary;
- Produce letters to parents of children whose attendance is a concern;
- Monitor persistent absence (PA) and respond when PA figures for individuals decline.
- Monitor attendance on a regular basis, setting targets for improvement as appropriate;
- Review registers and attendance and punctuality figures on a daily and weekly basis;
- Students with significantly higher attendance will receive rewards on a weekly and half-termly basis;
- Students with improved attendance will receive rewards on a weekly and half-termly basis;
- Annual prizes will be awarded for students with significantly high attendance throughout the year;
- Support the regular Academy attendance and help remove any barriers that may be preventing a pupil from fully accessing the education to which he/she is entitled.

6. **Communication**

The Academy's Attendance policy will be communicated through:

- Academy Website
- During tutor time
- Admission meetings
- Parental meetings
- Letters to parents
- Regular newsletter items;
- Guidance and advice in the staff handbook;

7. **Strategies for dealing with attendance**

- A statement of attendance will appear on each student's report;
- Electronic and/or first day response calling will be used;
- Standard letters home asking for reasons for absence will be used where no reasons are provided;
- Standard letters, sent fortnightly, will be used where attendance is a concern in liaison with the Education Welfare Officer;
- Parental meetings and / or home visits will be organised to discuss strategies to support attendance, with action plans created to support;
- Liaison with other professional services (e.g. Children's Social Care) will be conducted to ensure there is a multi-agency approach to attendance where appropriate;
- SIMS attendance figures will be issued to SLT for analysis half-termly;
- Systematic checking of attendance of specific students selected because of previous history, or whose attendance gives cause for concern;
- Persistent absence (PA) figures will be monitored;

- The attendance team will work closely with educational welfare services and report children as CME where this is applicable.

8. Children missing in education

If a student is not in school by 9:15am and we do not have a valid reason for the absence, a phone call home and a home visit will be made.

If a student is not in school by 9.15am, and we not received a valid reason for the absence through a tutor phone call, a home visit will be made that day.

If a student is absent for more than 2 days, and the Academy has been unable to make contact with home during that time, the following procedure will occur:

- On the 3rd day of absence, if a student has not been seen by a member of our attendance team, it will be reported on our safeguarding system.
- On day 4, if a student has not been seen by a member of our attendance team we may make a referral into external services.
- On day 5 of absence, if a student has still not been seen by a member of our attendance team then a report will be logged with the police.
- After 3 weeks of absence, and the student has still not been seen by a member of our staff a report will be made to 'The Child Missing Education Team' at the local authority (as per LA policy).

Although this is the process, it may be necessary to make amendments for individual student needs.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Looked After Children Policy
- PSHE and RSE Policy
- SEN Policy

Appendix 1

APPENDIX 1: ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM – present in school during registration
\	Present PM – present in school during registration
L	Late arrival before the register has closed counts as present. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments). If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations.
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.

H	Authorised absence due to holiday authorised by the school – Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher’s discretion.
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made – If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion.
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to absence authorised by the school.
B	Approved educational activity as pupil is being educated off site (NOT dual registration) – This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school.
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) - NOT counted in possible attendances – This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.
J	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment – This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment.
P	Approved educational activity as the pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity.
V	Approved educational activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip.
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience.

G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived in school after registers closed.
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil is absent from school without authorisation.
N	Unauthorised absence as a reason that has not yet been provided
X	<p>Not required to be in school – used to record sessions that <i>non-compulsory school age children</i> are not expected to attend; this also now applies to <i>COVID related absences</i>, the sub codes are:</p> <p>X01 – Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend. X02 – Pupil self-isolating with Covid-19 symptoms X03 – Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19 INSIDE the school setting. X04 – Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19 OUTSIDE the school setting. X05 – Pupil required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory) X06 – Pupil not in school because they have been advised specifically by their Doctor or Public Health Authority that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and should not attend. X07 – Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out on Government advice.</p>
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because: the school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupils home is not within walking distance or a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school. This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because: the pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity). This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purpose.
Z	Pupil not on admission register – This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.

#	Planned whole or partial school closure – This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.
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Attendance Policy: Covid-19 Addendum – Guidance

The principles as set out in The Aspire Academy Attendance Policy remain and should continue to be followed. This addendum should not be used as a standalone document and should be read in conjunction with the existing policy.

The guidance below is based on the DFE guidelines.

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2021 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct