



# THE ACORNS SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### RATIONALE

The aim of this policy is to develop a whole school strategy that raises the profile of attendance in order to maximise the education opportunities available to pupils.

The Acorns School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The Acorns School will create a positive and supportive environment in which pupils engage with their education and improve in self confidence, regardless of gender, culture, location, ethnicity, special educational needs or family background

For pupils to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

All children of compulsory school age should receive suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The primary responsibility for ensuring school attendance falls on parents/carers. Failure to comply with this requirement is an offence under Section 444 of The 1996 Education Act.

### AIMS

Our learners are often those who have become acutely dis-engaged from learning and as such are often those who have very poor records of attendance. We have a commitment to actively pursue each pupil's attendance by a system of daily phone calls at close of register. If we have 3 consecutive non-attendances without contact from parent/carer, or without an adequate explanation, then we would follow the Schools attendance tracking progress.

Good attendance + good learning = raised achievement, self-esteem and good behaviour. To achieve this all students need to reach The Acorns School expected target of **97%** and above.

All Staff at The Acorns School acknowledge the importance of regular attendance and will:

- Establish a high profile for regular attendance and punctuality

- Ensure staff, parents and pupils recognise their respective roles with regard to the promotion of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensure consistent use of a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and monitoring attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure consistent use of the systems of rewards to recognise good and/or improving attendance and punctuality
- Ensure the consistent use of sanctions in place to address attendance and punctuality issues
- Work to build positive and consistent relationships and communication between school and parents/carers in order to develop helpful working partnerships and in order to encourage regular and punctual attendance
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- Work in partnership with other agencies according to pupils' needs. All information exchange will adhere to Data Protection requirements.

## PROCEDURES

### Registration

- Daily attendance record completed by Form tutors checked by Admin team .
- Alternative/off site provision responsible for informing Admin Assistant of attendance.
- Use of SIMS to record attendance data
- Messages received from parents in relation to attendance are recorded in SIMS.
- **The school will decide whether to authorise absences.**
- Follow up calls made by Administration staff and recorded in Sims.
- Signing in/ out book maintained to record pupils arriving later/ leaving before their designated time.

### Holidays in term time/Extended leave

The Acorns School will only authorise holidays in any academic year *in exceptional circumstances for pupils with above 97%* attendance, on receipt of a prior request from the parent/carer with whom the pupil usually resides. Requests will only be considered when the parent/carer is able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

## **Procedures when pupils are late or absent from school:**

1. Late arrivals must report to the Administration Assistant. If a late arrival is due to transport difficulties, the pupil is marked present. See appendix 1 for persistent lateness.
2. On the first day of absence, where the school has not been informed, a telephone call is made by a designated person, i.e. clerical staff, to parents/carers to establish reason for absence.
3. If contact is not made initially, the ATTENDANCE OFFICER/FORM TUTOR will attempt contact and/or home visit, as appropriate.
4. If absence continues or becomes a regular occurrence a letter will be sent to parent/carers and followed up with a home visit.
5. For those pupils for whom attendance poses significant problems, a visit to the home will be made by the ATTENDANCE OFFICER/KEYWORKER, to establish the return to school date with the parents/carers.
6. If the pupil continues to be absent, either a review meeting, attendance panel meeting or Governor Panel meeting will be arranged to discuss further actions to be taken.
7. An attendance contract may be put in place.
8. Concerns and subsequent discussions will be recorded and a copy put in the pupil's file.
9. **In accordance with LCC protocols, attendance issues which remain unresolved will be considered for legal intervention.**
10. Clerical staff will maintain lists of named contacts in the local community eg community policy contact officer, who may be called when pupils abscond from the premises.

### **LEGAL INTERVENTION**

**In accordance with Local Authority (LA) guidelines the school will employ Legal Intervention as appropriate for unauthorised holidays, persistent lateness and other unauthorised circumstances.**

**Under section 444(1) (A) of the 1996 education act parents are required to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Prosecution under this office leads to a summons to the magistrates court and can lead to a**

financial penalty. Section 23 of the 2003 Anti Social behaviour act also gives schools the ability to serve penalty notices for poor school attendance. This is a fine of £120 per parent per child. This also applies to unauthorised leave/ holidays. LAs also have responsibility under sections 444, 444A and 444ZA of the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school.

### **STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT THE AIMS OF THE POLICY**

**In order to raise the profile and improve the overall percentage attendance, staff at The Acorns will implement the following:**

1. Ensure that regular attendance and punctuality is part of the school culture and ethos.
2. Have designated members of staff responsible for attendance (Admin Assistant, Attendance Officer)
3. Complete attendance records daily, to provide a record of all pupils for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation.
4. Review and evaluate Attendance issues regularly (the ATTENDANCE OFFICER and Headteacher/Deputy meet on a weekly basis). Attendance is an agenda item for monthly staff meetings. The Attendance Officer will be kept informed of Pastoral meetings.
5. Set Attendance targets for each pupil and review regularly. Individual rewards will be awarded for meeting attendance targets at the end of each term or shorter periods as appropriate.
6. Encourage all pupils to monitor their own attendance through tutorials/ Keyworker sessions, Form Tutors/ Keyworkers liaise with ATTENDANCE OFFICER to discuss individual strategies and targets.
7. Improved attendance figures will be acknowledged using the accepted awards of the systems in place at the school i.e. letters home, certificates, merit system.
8. The School has systems for monitoring attendance at both individual pupil and whole school level and will analyse patterns and trends of non attendance to inform future planning and target setting.

**Staff at The Acorns School will make attendance and punctuality a priority for parents and pupils by:**

- Including attendance data as part of progress reports.

- Having expectations of full attendance to be agreed with parents and pupils through a home/school agreement (see Home School Agreement Document) which parent/guardian will be invited to sign during the admissions process by the Admissions Officer at the school.
- Reminding parents that under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, that parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive suitable full time education.
- Giving written and verbal procedures to parents/carers to follow, regarding pupil absence. These will be explained at pupils' initial Admissions interview.
- Communication by letter to inform parents/carers of attendance issues/ good attendance.
- Good attendance acknowledged through displays and reward system.

**In order to promote effective partnerships with other agencies, staff at The Acorns School will:**

- Operate an open door policy and actively support multi-agency approaches aimed at improving attendance and punctuality.
- Initiate multi-agency reviews for persistent non-attenders to agree a plan to support improved attendance and further actions should the attendance issues continue.
- For dual rolled pupils, the host school is kept aware of any issues regarding attendance and punctuality and kept aware of reintegration strategies. If poor attendance continues and strategies are unsuccessful, pupils may be returned to the host school.
- For pupils coming to the Acorns School with poor attendance, Acorns may provide an integration programme jointly with the host school until required attendance levels are reached.
- When pupils are reintegrating into school, close liaison will be maintained with the Pupil Access Team and any attendance issues should be addressed at the initial planning meeting. Input from the school will be vital in ensuring successful transition and full attendance.

Where education is included on a Supervision Order, Youth Offending Teams will be informed of absence on the first day. Should non attendance continue, close liaison with YOTs will run in parallel with the procedures already laid down.

- Where possible appropriate staff will attend YOT planning meetings for pupils on their roll; this may have a direct impact on attendance, achievement and reintegration.
- For those pupils not on a Supervision Order, but whose poor attendance may link with criminal behaviour, the school may refer to other Early Help Agencies as appropriate.

Useful contact numbers:-

Julie Rimmer, ATTENDANCE OFFICER	01695 575486
Children Missing Education	01257 517333
YOT (Chorley)	01257 516051
YOT (Skelmersdale)	01695 651211
Social Care	01695 651200
Pupil Access Team	01772 532252

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Reviewed March 2018  
Reviewed November 2018  
Next Review November 2020

## **EXPECTATIONS**

It is the responsibility of parents to make sure your child attends school regularly and arrives at school on time. Any arrival after school start time could be considered an unauthorised absence. Punctuality to The Acorns School the following expectations apply to all students:

- School starts at 9.00am and pupils should be in their form room by 9.00 a.m. each day. The student is late if he arrives after this time.
- If a student arrives after this time with a genuine reason, he should bring a note from home to this effect. This can be brought the following day if necessary.
- If arriving between 9am and 9.30am, the student should book-in late with the receptionist.
- Any pupil arriving after 10am is deemed to be late after the register has closed and will be marked as such, thus incurring unauthorised absence.

## **LEGAL INTERVENTIONS**

Unauthorised absence or your child being frequently late could result in fine or prosecution.

Every school, by law, has to register pupils twice a day; first thing in the morning at the start of the school day, and again in the afternoon session. If a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend or arrives late they can be marked as an absence for that session.

If a pupil arrives after registration has closed the absence will be recorded as unauthorised for that session. If this persists legal action, in the form of a Penalty Notice or Prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 may follow.

The Acorns School defines persistent lateness as 10 late arrivals over a term represented as 'U' in the attendance register. Only the parents/carers of those pupils arriving after the close of registers and thus being recorded as 'U' in the register can be issued with a Penalty Notice and/or subsequently prosecuted under s.444(1) or s.444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

## Appendix 1

### Attendance – persistent lateness

The school or the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice under the 2003 Anti Social Behaviour Act in cases of persistent lateness provided the following conditions are met:

- A pupil is persistently late and there are a minimum of 10 late arrivals in term coded 'U' in the attendance register.
- The school has sent a warning letter to a pupil's parent/carer as they approach the threshold for persistent lateness, informing them of this and of the legal consequences of continued lateness.
- There have been at least two incidents of lateness subsequent to the above letter.
- All arrival times have been recorded and made available if needed, to the Courts.