



# ASTON FIELDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Review date: September 2024

Cycle: 1 year

Date of next review: September 2025



## **Aston Fields Middle School**

### **Attendance Policy**

At Aston Fields Middle School, we believe that maintaining good attendance is not only essential for academic success and progression, but that it also plays a crucial role in nurturing the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of all our pupils.

Therefore, if your child is reluctant to attend school, for any reason, please contact the school as a matter of urgency so that we can work together to help resolve issues and alleviate any worries or concerns.

#### **The aims of this policy are:**

To encourage pupils to achieve the highest possible attendance;

To allow pupils to gain full access to their education;

To ensure a safe and supportive environment for pupils;

To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers and pupils where necessary;

To recognise factors which may impact upon a child's attendance at school and work with parents/carers to address issues.

#### **Key Principles and Key Issues**

To provide an accurate, efficient and effective system for recording and monitoring attendance, including punctuality, at school;

To promote an ethos where parents/carers are encouraged to work with the school to promote good attendance for pupils.

#### **Attendance Procedures**

- Registers will be completed, twice daily, by staff during morning registration and at the start of the afternoon session. These registers are what is available to parents / carers to view via the MCAS App.



- Registers will be done electronically, using Bromcom, or if this is not available, a paper register will be completed, with marks being entered into Bromcom by the School's Attendance Officer at the earliest opportunity.
- Staff will complete registers at the start of each lesson for safeguarding purposes.
- Parents /carers are asked to report pupil absence to the school by leaving a message on the school's answerphone, giving the reason for the absence on the first day of absence. Parents/carers are asked to provide updates every morning in the case of ongoing absence.
- Any pupils who are not present will be marked with the appropriate absence code, or with an N if a reason for the absence has not yet been received.
- Where a reason for absence is not received from a parent/carer, the absence will be **Unauthorised**.
- Pupils who arrive late (after 8.50am) must sign in at the front office and their marks will be updated accordingly on Bromcom.
- Where a reason for an absence is not received, or a pupil continues to be absent and an update is not received, contact will be made from the school to the parent/carer to confirm the absence. In the first instance, a text message will be sent to the parent/carers asking you to provide a reason for your child's absence. If there is no response to this message, and the pupil remains absent, a message will be left on an answerphone/voicemail if the school is unable to speak to the parent/carer. It is vitally important that parent/carer contact details are kept up to date and any changes are notified to the school immediately. Parents/carers are requested to provide at least two emergency contact numbers.
- If, after two days of absence, the school is unable to contact a parent/carer to establish the reason for absence, we will make a visit to the pupil's home address. If a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, and the school is unable to contact parents/carers, a home visit may be carried out on the first day of any absence. In certain cases, and where there is genuine cause for concern for a child's wellbeing, the Police may be asked to visit the home to perform a 'safe and well' check.
- Where a child has prolonged periods of absence from school, or from any alternative provision, the school's safeguarding team will perform regular 'safe and well' checks, to ensure the child is safeguarded effectively.
- Registers will be taken at the start of each lesson as part of our internal safeguarding procedures.



## **Monitoring Attendance**

The school will use the official register to monitor pupil attendance.

Pupil attendance data will be reviewed on a frequent and regular basis. Parents/carers may be contacted by the school if there is cause for concern, or if further information is needed in order for the absence to be authorised or for the pupil's return to school to be supported in any way. This information may include, for example, medical evidence from the child's GP or other medical professional.

Where a child has prolonged or regular absence due to medical or health reasons, and/or frequent medical appointments, the school will request medical evidence before the absence is authorised i.e. a letter from the Doctor, a signed appointment card, a copy prescription etc. Until such evidence is obtained, the absence will be unauthorised. The onus is on the parent/carer to provide such evidence, and this must be done within a reasonable timescale set by the school.

Parents/carers should note that it is at the school's discretion as to whether any absence is authorised and that current guidelines mean very few absences will be authorised.

The school also monitors pupils who arrive late at school. Parents/carers will be contacted if a pupil arrives late at school on a frequent basis.

### **Where attendance concerns are identified, the following steps may be taken:**

- The pupil may be spoken to by a member of staff in order to encourage improved attendance – this may be the pupil's form tutor, Director of Year Group, Attendance Officer or in cases of particular concern, a member of the School's Senior Leadership Team.
- The parent/carer may be contacted by telephone, letter or visit to establish the reasons for the absence and any other relevant information;
- Parents/carers may be asked to attend a meeting in school;
- Medical evidence may be requested in order for the school to authorise the absence, and any future absence (as previously mentioned).
- The school will advise parents/carers of the legal implications of ongoing absence.
- The school will endeavour to engage with the pupil and parents/carers to encourage improved attendance. This may include, but is not limited to, ongoing monitoring, target setting, mentoring support, involvement of Early Intervention Family Support.

## **Persistent Absence**

From September 2015, pupils with attendance levels of less than 90% will be designated Persistent Absentees.



90% attendance is the equivalent of missing the following number of sessions (2 sessions = one school day).

<b>Half term 1</b>	<b>7 or more sessions (3.5 days)</b>
<b>Half term 1 – 2</b>	<b>14 or more sessions (7 or more days)</b>
<b>Half terms 1 – 3</b>	<b>20 or more sessions (10 or more days)</b>
<b>Half terms 1 – 4</b>	<b>25 or more sessions (12.5 or more days)</b>
<b>Half terms 1 – 5</b>	<b>31 or more sessions (15.5 or more days)</b>
<b>Half terms 1 – 6 (full academic year)</b>	<b>38 or more sessions (16 or more days)</b>

Parents/carers and pupils should be aware that all absences are included within Persistent Absence figures – so, for example, this could include absence for illness, medical appointments, holiday and family emergencies. Pupils with attendance of 90% miss the equivalent of one day each fortnight.

### **Planned Absence for Holiday or similar reasons during Term Time**

Absence for family holiday, or similar reasons, during term time will **not** be authorised unless exceptional circumstances apply. **All planned** absence **must** be notified to the school as far in advance as possible, but at least 2 weeks before, and parents/carers should be aware that unauthorised absence for holiday or similar reasons may lead to the issue, by the Local Authority, of a Fixed Penalty Notice and the payment of a fine. Non-payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice may lead to court proceedings.

Where parents/carers ask for absence to be authorised due to exceptional circumstances, the school will require additional supporting evidence to enable full consideration to be given to the request.

If a child is taken out of school for holiday or other reasons, and the school is not informed, the absence will be unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

### **Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to be in school by 08.50 when the bell rings for morning registration. Pupils arriving after this time must report to the school office to sign in and will be marked in the register as Late. We appreciate that occasional lateness is unavoidable due to medical appointments or unforeseen emergencies, but we do ask that parents/carers aim to ensure their child arrives in school in good time, to avoid disruption to the child's learning and that of the rest of the class.

The school will contact parents/carers whose children arrive in school late on a frequent basis. Late arrival after 09.20 may result in a pupil missing their attendance for the whole of the am session and this will therefore impact upon their official attendance.



If parents/carers are aware that their child will be late, they should contact the school to advise of this.

### **Medical Appointments**

Routine medical appointments should, wherever possible, be made outside of school hours. If this is not possible, pupils should be collected from school and returned after the appointment. Parents/carers should inform the school, wherever possible, in advance of appointments and provide copy appointment cards/letters.

### **Children Missing Education (CME)**

The school recognises that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Our procedures for dealing with children missing from education are based on the Local Authority and Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

If a pupil fails to return to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the school's admission register, when the school and local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This may include, but is not restricted to: making telephone calls to named contacts, attempting home visits, sending letters home requesting that contact is made with the school, speaking to schools where siblings may attend, requesting safe and well checks from the Police.

Where parents/carers elect to remove their child from the school role in order to electively home educate their child, the school will follow the appropriate deregistration procedures, including notifying the Local Authority of the parent's decision.

Where a pupil moves to a new school setting, at a point other than a usual transition phase, the School will endeavour to confirm that the pupil has joined the new school and has been accepted onto the new school's official register. If this cannot be confirmed, the pupil's details will be passed to the Child Missing Education team at the Local Authority before being removed from the school role.

### **Attendance Information for Parents**

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a proper, full-time education. You, as parents/carers are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide an effective education. If your child is registered as a pupil at a particular school, that school must give permission for your



child to be absent. If your child does not attend the school at which he/she is registered, the relevant education authority can take legal action against you.

In order to work in partnership to encourage excellent attendance, we would ask that you support your child in the following ways:

- ✓ Make sure your child attends school regularly, arriving promptly every day. Starting this good habit early means that attendance issues are less likely to arise as your child gets older.
- ✓ If your child is unwell or unable to attend school for any reason, please contact the school as early as possible in the school day. The school will be concerned about your child's wellbeing if we do not hear from you.
- ✓ Please ensure that reasons for absence are genuine. Do not encourage absence by allowing your child to miss school for minor illnesses, shopping trips, days out or birthday treats.
- ✓ Wherever possible, please arrange medical appointments such as visits to the doctor, dentist and optician outside of school hours.
- ✓ **If your child is reluctant to attend school for any reason, please speak to the school as a matter of urgency so steps can be taken to resolve any issues or alleviate any worries or concerns.**
- ✓ If you have any concerns about your child's attendance at school, please get in touch with us so that we may help. Please contact Mrs M Stacey, Attendance Officer in the first instance. Mrs Wildsmith, Associate Assistant Headteacher, is the Senior Teacher in school responsible for attendance and Mrs Mynott, Assistant Headteacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Both will also be happy to help you, but you must speak to Mrs Stacey first, unless in case of an emergency. Thank you.