

## Attendance Policy Local Procedures Aurora Chaldon School

**Please refer to Main Policy A6 Attendance Policy**

**This local procedure should be read in conjunction with Aurora’s Attendance Policy A6.**

### **1 Attendance register – times:**

Students must arrive in school by 09:00 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open until 09:15. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13:30 and will be kept open until 13:40.

Students that arrive between 09:15 and 09:30 will be marked as late (L) and students that arrive after 09:30 will be marked as late after registration closes (U).

### **1.2 Offsite provisions:**

Where students attend offsite provision supervised by school staff, the supporting member of staff will call the school office to confirm attendance.

Where students attend offsite or alternative provision not supervised by school staff, the school office will call the setting to confirm attendance.

### **1.3 Re-integration timetables:**

In exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a re-integration timetable. Re-integration timetables will only be implemented for a time limited period to support the transition of the student back into school, ensuring that this meets the student’s needs and where safe to do so.

Re-integration timetables are only a short-term solution and will have regular review dates to seek to increase time in school. If the student is not making progress and or is not attending full-time, an alternative provision will be sought.

Re-integration timetables will only be put in place with the agreement of parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family.

## **2 Unplanned absence**

The student’s parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible, a voice mail can be left if no one is in reception.

The school will ring the parent/carer between 9.00 and 9.30 if a pupil has not arrived at school to check on the reason for the absence or to check if the parent is aware that their child has not arrived on site.

- If school are unable to contact the student's parent/carer, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be called.
  - If school cannot contact the student's parent/carer, and the child's whereabouts/safety can not be established, a home visit may be carried out by an appropriate member of staff.
  - If a student is subject to a Child Protection Plan, their allocated social worker will be contacted in the event of any unplanned absences.
  - If the school are not satisfied with the reason for an absence an appropriate member of staff may facilitate a home visit. Multiple absence and illness reports without evidence may trigger a safeguarding concern, home visit and/or a referral into Children's Services.
  - If a child has not been seen for a week, school staff will contact the family to arrange a face-to-face visit, either virtually or in person. These circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
  - If a child leaves school without permission, parents/carers will be contacted immediately.
- 3 Planned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school as early as possible to inform the school of any planned absence. Parents/carers can contact the school via phone or email.

Medical appointments require evidence for these to be authorised absences.

## 4 Leave of Absence

The Principal and Head of School reserve the right not to authorise absences if the reason is not deemed satisfactory.

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. The Headteacher will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. Each application is considered individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.

- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a student fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

#### 4.1 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parents notify the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. No student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. However, if the child is on an action plan to support their improvement of attendance, all periods of illness require evidence e.g. medical appt confirmation. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer.

#### 4.2 Absence for religious observance

The Aurora Group acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the student absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

#### 4.2 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) students are among the lowest achieving groups of students at every key stage in education, although some GRT students achieve very well at school. There are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT students. Schools and Local Authorities can make a big difference to their life chances through:

- Clear high expectation of all students, regardless of their background
- An inclusive culture that welcomes all communities
- Strong engagement from parents

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a student of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered student as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and

- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted
- This provision applies only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

To ensure we can effectively support all our students, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

## 5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Where communication to school is not forthcoming from parents, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Complete a welfare check will be made by a representative from the school in the event of no communication on day 3 of an absence. In some cases this could be carried out by another relevant professional working with the family or the Police.
- Where a child on a child protection plan is absent from school and unexplained, the social worker will be contacted.
- If the child has been absent for three consecutive days a phone call will be made to understand when the child will be expected back at school.
- Students with unauthorised absences will be written to at the end of the week asking for explanation as to the reason for absence.
- Any patterns of poor attendance will be followed up by the school with the child and their family.
- Where a student has not been seen for 1 week, an eyes on check will be made. This could be a home visit or a video call unless in the case of a known illness or with support from an external agency (eg social worker).
- Where a student is absent from school for longer than 1 week and it is considered to be detrimental to the wellbeing of them to have contact from school, a risk assessment will be created in conjunction with family, any other multi agency partner and agreed by the Headteacher/Principal.

## 6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is communicated to parents throughout the year through termly reports. If there are concerns around a child's attendance, this will be picked up throughout our attendance monitoring system outlined below.

## 7 Attendance monitoring

Our approach to managing attendance is structured into four key stages, designed to provide appropriate support and intervention while recognising individual circumstances. Each case is reviewed on an individual basis, with consideration given to the reasons for absence and any additional needs or challenges faced by the young person and their family.

**Stage 1 – Initial Concern Letter**

A letter is sent home to parents/carers to acknowledge that a child's attendance is beginning to decline if a child's actual attendance falls below 95% due to unauthorised circumstances. This stage serves as an early intervention to highlight concerns and open up communication. It is important to note that authorised absences, such as those related to a period of transition into school, do not automatically trigger a cause for concern. All absences are considered in context and each case is considered on an individual basis.

**Stage 2 – Attendance Action Plan Meeting**

If there are up to 3 further absences of concern following a Stage 1 letter, an attendance assessment meeting is arranged to identify and agree an action plan to support improvements to attendance. All children who's attendance is below 90% are expected to have an action plan in place. This meeting includes the Family Support Officer (FSO), the child's tutor or teacher, and the parents/carers. The purpose is to identify barriers to attendance and agree on supportive strategies. Examples of support include daily morning check-ins for anxious pupils or referrals to Early Help to support family circumstances.

**Stage 3 – Attendance Contract**

Where attendance does not improve following Stage 2 interventions and further concerning absences occur, a Stage 3 meeting is held to create an attendance contract. This is attended by the FSO, Pastoral Lead and DSL, the teacher, and parents/carers. The contract outlines the legal obligation for children to attend school and is signed by both the school and parents to formalise the shared commitment to improvement.

**Stage 4 – Inclusion Team Referral**

If there is still no significant improvement, and absences continue without acceptable justification, the case may be escalated to Stage 4. This involves a referral to the local authority's inclusion team. Prior to referral, a 'notice to improve' letter may be issued, detailing the risk of a fine. Whether a fine is pursued will depend on the reason for the continued absence.

## 7.1 Persistent Absence and the use of legal intervention

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all students at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. Persistent Absences will be discussed with the schools allocated Inclusion Officer from Surrey and advice sought.

## 8 Roles and responsibilities

### Attendance officer

In addition to the main policy, the schools attendance officer will:

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head of School
- Works with Surrey's allocated Inclusion Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Head of School when the school should consider liaising with the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings

### From Tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitted the information on Engage, within the timeframes stated above

### School Admin Staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. If staff have any concerns they will immediately report these to a member of the safeguarding team.

The Receptionist should ensure that the daily attendance log and responsibilities form is completed and sent to all members of SLT, by 10am each morning. This will allow all absences to be identified promptly and allow action to be taken in a timely manner.

## Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

<b>Present Codes</b>	
/	present during AM registration
\	present during PM registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed (9.15am-9.30am)
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
<b>Absent Codes</b>	
<b>Authorised Absences</b>	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed (9.30am)
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)

