



# The Avenue School Special Needs Academy

## Attendance and Absence Policy

Date policy last reviewed: October 2025

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Signed by:

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Headteacher

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Trustees

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Contents:

### Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Definitions
4. Following up on an absence
5. Pupils at risk of persistent absence
6. Absence procedures
7. Parental involvement
8. Attendance register
9. Attendance officer
10. Lateness
11. Term time leave
12. Late drop off and early collection
13. Religious observances
14. Medical and Dental Appointments
15. Monitoring and review

## Statement of intent

The Avenue School Special Needs Academy believes that regular and punctual attendance underpins the good progress necessary to increase life chances and opportunities for all of our young people. It is a vital element in a commitment towards valuing school, and in the understanding that continuity and progression lead to successful learning and all round individual development.

We are committed to:

- Parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

The law relating to safeguarding states, 'poor attendance can be an early alert for safeguarding issues. Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and student under the age of 18. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation and radicalisation, and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) later in life.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Health and Safety
- Anti – Bullying
- Equality statement

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, against all protected characteristics.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence. In individual cases, short and/or longer term, pupils will require flexibility and an individualised approach to maximise time in school, with a small number of individuals accessing the School2Home vision.
- Applying fairness and consistency when considering authorisation of in term holiday requests.

The Class Teacher and Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils/parents do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good and punctual attendance.
- In discussion with the appropriate senior staff, using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times twice daily, within timeframes, 9.15am for morning session and 1.30pm for afternoon session.
- Parent communication before 9.30am if they are not in school

The attendance officer is responsible for informing the LA Attendance Support Worker and relevant local authority bodies of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- An exclusion applies
- Report weekly to the Head Teacher
- Prepare a termly report to Trustees.
- Communicate with lead for CLA pupils, DSL, Head Teacher PA as appropriate to individual absence.
- Monitor parent requests for late starts and early collection
- Inform the local authority, upon request of Children missing education (CME), persistent absenteeism, pupils on a part time timetable, pupils accessing Alternative Provision (AP), etc.
- Oversee and applying the principles of the annual Whole School Attendance Strategy

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details, for two appropriate adults.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Informing the school immediately (before 8 a.m.), with a reason, if their child will not be attending school
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

### **3. Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness, or exceptional circumstances, for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without an appropriate reason or appropriate evidence to support the reason for absence
- Absences which have never been properly explained

#### **Persistent absenteeism and Children Missing Education (CME):**

- Missing 10 consecutive days or more of schooling across the year for any reason.
- Missing 10% of schooling across the year for any reason.

### **4. Following up on absence**

The school will follow up on absences before 9.30am on Day 1 if they have not been notified of the reason for absence. Messages from third parties, such as transport escorts/drivers will not be deemed as an official notification. Parents will be contacted by class staff to verify an absence. If parent/s are unable to be contacted on the first morning of absence, then the school will attempt to speak to alternative contacts held on file. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed if there are concerns about a child's safety. In discussion with the Head teacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may request the support of social services if contact is an extended issue. If contact has not been made within 48 hours, a home visit will take place. The Attendance Support Worker (previously EWO) and police may be contacted to concerning a welfare visit to the family home.

### **5. Pupils at risk of persistent absence**

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

A member of the Leadership Team (LT)/pastoral support staff/Attendance Officer/DSL will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.

- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend attendance reviews and meetings in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Communicating with parents and Social Worker if appropriate..
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams, inc. Safeguarding and CME Officer and Attendance Support Worker (previously EWO).
  - Engaging with external professionals. inc. social services, if appropriate.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
  - Creating regular attendance meetings.

Where a pupil at risk of persistent absence, is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil and family in line with the school's duty of care. Individual situations may be referred to the Attendance Support Worker (ASW, previously EWO), with a targeted support meeting arranged to work collaboratively to support improved attendance.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in Need (CIN)
- Children Looked After (CLA)
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL

## **6. Absence procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office by 8am via telephone 01183389038 or email [pupilabsence@avenue.reading.sch.uk](mailto:pupilabsence@avenue.reading.sch.uk) as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school reception, where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

A telephone call will be made by 9.30am to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken, if appropriate.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school register.

The school will inform the Local Authority, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days, or more without authorisation. The school will also separately report termly of the details of pupils who are technically attending part time/on part time timetables.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90% the Attendance Officer will be informed, and formal communication with the parent will be made.

The Attendance Support Worker and Headteacher will meet regularly to discuss collective trends and issues, and individual pupils considered CME (Children Missing Education).

## 7. Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services. Due to the additional needs of the pupils and everyone's unique situations, the Head teacher and Attendance Officer will work with parents to ensure best outcomes and attendance for each individual pupil.

Parents will be expected to:

- Actively support the work of the school.
- Parents are expected to have explored all options of support before contacting the school for additional support. As a school, we are keen to assist families if we have the resources to do so, but this may not always be possible.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

## 8. Attendance register

Class Leads will take the attendance register at the start of each school day before 9.15 a.m. and at the start of the afternoon session, before 1.30pm. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

Code	Reason
/	Present at school (Morning Session)
\	Present at school (afternoon session)
B	Attending any other approved educational activity.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable
D	Dual Registered at another School
E	Excluded
G	Holiday not granted by school
I	Illness

J1	Attending an interview
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late arrival before the register has closed
M	Attending a medical or Dental appointment
P	Participating in a sporting activity
Q	Lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
X	Non-compulsory school age not required to attend school.
Y1	Transport normally provided not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part of the school premises closed
Y4	Whole school closed
Y5	Pupil is in the criminal justice detention
Y6	Acting in accordance with public health guidance or law.
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## 9. Attendance Officer

If pupils are persistently absent, the Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers and attempt to resolve the situation through parental agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officer will contact the Head teacher, who has the authority to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices (issued by the local authority).

The Attendance Officer will monitor and analyse attendance data, reporting to the Head teacher weekly.

## 10. Lateness

As the large majority of pupils travel to school via school transport, we recognise that lateness in many cases is beyond the control of the pupil or parents. Having said that, punctuality is of the utmost importance at the school.

The school day starts at 8.45 a.m. Pupils should be entering school at this time. Registers are marked by 9:15 a.m. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time, unless there is an acceptable explanation.

## **11. Term-time leave**

During normal circumstances, the school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the Head teacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term time. The Head teacher will only be allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. The School calendar, with annual term dates, are shared at least 1 year in advance. Applications will be made in advance and the Head teacher will need to be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The Headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time, usually no more than 5 days in a school year. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered, if appropriate.

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head teacher, the absence is recorded as unauthorised and they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines (issued by the local authority).

## **12. Late drop off and Early collection.**

Requests for late drop off or early collection must be made formally to the Head Teacher. Agreements from a previous school year do not run over into a new school year.

## **13. Religious observances**

The school will take advice to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are requested for days of religious observance. The Head Teacher will make the final decision on this.

## **14. Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is recorded as an authorised absence; advance notice required. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

## **15. Monitoring and review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored at least weekly.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2026.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders

