



# **Children Absent from Education and Attendance Policy**

(including Attendance Guidance for Parents)

**SPAIN**

### Policy Statement

The school maintains Attendance Registers for all pupils. The school will work in a collaborative way with external agencies, in accordance with any national and/or local legislation.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach taken to:

- Recording attendance information on a daily basis;
- Recording information at the point a pupil leaves the school;
- Managing a situation when a pupil has unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence from education; and
- Working with authorities where there are safeguarding concerns linked to attendance.

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## 1 Attendance

### 1.1 Introduction

It is important that staff, parents and pupils are familiar with this policy. Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally.

Missing learning time through having unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence leaves children vulnerable to falling behind in their learning and it is well known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. Furthermore, poor attendance can also impact on a child's social and emotional development. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents, and the child, beginning from the Early Years

### 1.2 The legal framework

Legislation specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school every day. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs, either by regular school attendance or home education.

The school is required to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers.

### 1.3 Link between attendance, wellbeing and achievement

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement, as well as a strong link between truancy and antisocial behaviour.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Individual pupils' barriers to attendance, however, often go far beyond the school gates. Persistent absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues in a pupil's life, and barriers to attendance are often specific to local contexts.

### 1.4 Parent/carer(s) responsibilities are to:

- Encourage regular and sustained attendance for the child in their care, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for learning.
- Provide clear reasons for any absence for the child in their care which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child in their care's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the school day.
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children in their care from school during term time.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence of the child in their care, including any safeguarding matter.

### 1.5 School responsibilities

- All staff will maintain a positive school culture where monitoring, promoting, and incentivising attendance is seen as everyone's responsibility; staff, child and parent/carer.
- The school will have a nominated member of staff/team who are the named person/team overseeing attendance who will have a clear vision and oversight of all attendance matters.
- School staff will listen to children and their parents/carers to understand the barriers to the child's good attendance, working jointly with families to remove those barriers wherever possible
- All staff will work together to identify patterns/changes in attendance at an early stage to prevent any further absence, including addressing unexplained, persistent, or prolonged absence.
- All staff will work to ensure every pupil has good attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to, being particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.
- The school will keep accurate and efficient records (electronic) of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities.
- In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for the school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time/'staggered' timetable to meet their individual needs. A part-time timetable will have:
  - The written agreement of both the school and the parent/carers.
  - A clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
  - Regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure the plan is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
  - Have a proposed end date that takes into account the exceptional circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend school on site full-time. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term physical/mental health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period. Medical evidence will be needed, and external specialist intervention will need to be in place to support the child during this period.

- In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly.

We achieve this in the following ways:

- Providing parent/carer(s) of children in their care with the timings of the school day and the calendar, via the school website and any other usual method(s) such as the school newsletter, in advance;
- Teachers/class tutors taking a register at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon;
- Those taking the register marking all children who are not present by the designated time, taking account of absence notes;
- Following up un-notified first day absence with a telephone call to the parent/carer(s); children who are vulnerable must and will be prioritised (safeguarding, medical, and learning needs);
- Monitoring and analysing attendance and lateness and implementing strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance such as year groups or vulnerable children, as required, including the use of formal letters home;
- Reporting on patterns of attendance at Governance Meetings to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils;
- Specifically monitoring any unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence and addressing any concerns at an early stage with parents/carers of those children;
- Using the school codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, including preservation of the entries on both the Admissions and Attendance Registers for a period of six years after it was made;
- Authorising absences only in specific circumstances. Authorisation to be undertaken by the Headteacher/Principal or an agreed nominated member of staff in their absence.
- All staff and the person/team overseeing attendance liaise with the school's Child Protection and Wellbeing Coordinator to identify children whose attendance is emerging as a serious concern, including talking with children and their parents/carers regarding any unsatisfactory attendance, listening and understanding to find out the barrier(s) to good attendance and offering support;
- All staff and the person/team overseeing attendance liaise with the Child Protection and Wellbeing Coordinator where there are significant concerns about children having prolonged absence with/without parental co-operation, especially where there have been or currently are safeguarding concerns;
- Implementing any agreed improvement strategies, such as referral to children's social services in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

### 1.6 Unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absentees

Persistent absentees are pupils with attendance below 90%. The school will contact the parents/carers if their child's attendance approaches this threshold to listen and understand the reasons for declining attendance, discuss any concerns, and to plan a positive way forward, both in terms of in school support and/or a referral to the authorities as required. If attendance does not improve, the school will arrange a follow up meeting with the child's parents/carers to discuss the concerns and may contact the local authority in accordance with local procedures.

### 1.7 Late arrival

If a pupil arrives late, they must sign in at the school office so that school systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times. Repeated lateness will be discussed with the child's parents/carers to listen and understand the barriers to arrival on time.

### 1.8 Leaving school early during the day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by their known parent/carer for a specified reason. If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent is required to collect them for a medical appointment, they must sign out at the School Office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents must notify the school in advance.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the school site during the school day unless accompanied by staff members (agreed by the Headteacher) to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture. Pupils in sixth form have permission to leave at breaktimes or when they have finished lessons for the day. They must sign out at reception. Certain children have permission to leave school at lunchtime to eat at home and return in time for the next lesson.

### 1.9 Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)

- Schools, not parents, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Headteacher/Principal. The Headteacher/Principal or other nominated staff in their absence is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday or a leisure activity.
- We ask that parents make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for ill health (physical or mental) reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and, importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.
- An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the prior permission of the Headteacher/Principal or other nominated staff member in their absence.

### 1.10 Monitoring and review arrangements

Attendance rates are reported regularly to the Cognita Board. Proprietorial Governors report on pupil attendance, as well as any patterns or trends of persistent absence from school. Representatives of the Proprietor scrutinise Admissions and Attendance Registers for compliance and safeguarding purposes.

## 2 **Children Absent and/or Missing from Education**

### 2.1 Children missing from education are:

Children who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Children 'missing' from education are therefore different to those who are 'absent' from education

### 2.2 Children Absent from Education

Often children can be persistently absent from school or have prolonged absences. Of course, there may be a satisfactory reason for their absence, most often medical, for which this is needed, for example, the child is having operations/treatments. In these situations, it will be at the Headteacher/Principal's discretion whether the school will offer work to be completed at home/involve the child with their class remotely on MS Teams.

However, on other occasions, the child is frequently absent but there does not appear to be an explanation or a satisfactory reason. This is different from a child being a 'child missing in education' but it is still a concern.

As stated above, it is mandatory that children of a compulsory age attend school, but of most importance, frequent absences impact on a child's development across all domains, not purely cognitive.

If a child's absence continues, despite interventions to listen, identify and address the underlying cause(s)/barriers to attendance with both the child and parents/carers, then consideration may be given to seeking advice from social services in order to support the family.

## 3 Procedures for Children Absent from Education and Children Missing in Education

- If a new pupil fails to attend on at the beginning of first day of the agreed or notified Admissions date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. Schools must monitor all pupils' attendance through their daily register.
- Schools must address all attendance concerns with both parents/carers and, where appropriate, with the pupil as soon as challenges emerge.
- Schools should follow their local authority guidance in terms of the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the school will seek advice from the local education inspectorate or social services depending on its assessment of the circumstances. The school will make a written record that they have completed these procedures on their safeguarding systems.
- If there is reason to believe a child who is absent from school is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, whether there has been communication from parents/carers or not, a referral must and will be made to children's social services (and the police if appropriate). This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds (and medical evidence) to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.
- Elective Home Education: Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove their child from school with a view to educating them at home, the school will seek guidance from their local education inspectorate.

## 4. Safeguarding

- The school has a safeguarding duty in respect of its pupils, and as part of this will investigate any unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absences. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions (including truanting) can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and/or child criminal exploitation.

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- It is important that the school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social services and have an allocated a social worker, where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns about any child's absence, whether this be persistent, prolonged or unexplained, the school will always talk to the child and parents/carers about their concerns in order to understand the barriers to attendance. They will also follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which includes referring to social services as appropriate.
- Where children are absent for a period of time and there are safeguarding concerns, the school may arrange to have regular check-ins with the child via online methods e.g. MS Teams. The school has a duty to know where children are and have visibility of them. If the parents/carers of the child do not agree to this request, or do not respond to any such request, consideration will be given to seeking advice from/making a referral to local social services.
- Where there are existing/potential safeguarding concerns around a child, and the parent/carer unexpectedly removes their child to home educate them, a referral to children's social services must, and will be made.
- If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, whether this related to the child's absence or not, the school will inform the Police.
- Where there is a concern that an absent child's safety or well-being is at imminent risk, the school will take action without delay by calling the police or social services.

### Appendix 1 – Attendance Guidance for Parents

**Note – this section is intended to be used by schools to share with parents in whatever form is most appropriate.**

#### **Introduction**

Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years.

#### **The legal framework**

Legislation in Spain specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school every day.

The school is required to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers.

#### **Parent/carer(s) have responsibility to:**

- Be fully aware of their legal responsibilities for ensuring the child in their care attends school every day.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for learning.
- Provide clear reasons to the school for any absence which ensures the school can code the child's absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible.
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time as this can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence related to the child in their care, including any safeguarding matter.
- Adhere to any co-constructed reintegration plan where the child in their care has been absent from school for a longer period.

#### **School has the responsibility to:**

- Promote pupils' good attendance and reduce absence.
- Work to ensure every pupil has good attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to.
- Act early with parents/carers and children to address patterns of absence by listening and understanding any barriers to attendance.
- Encourage parents to ensure their child attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually.
- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities.

#### **Late arrival**

If a pupil arrives late, they must sign in at the school office so that our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

#### **Leaving school early during the day**

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff or their known parent/carer; or to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture. Pupils in sixth form have permission to leave at breaktimes or when they have finished



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lessons for the day. They must sign out at reception. Certain children have permission to leave school at lunchtime to eat at home and return in time for the next lesson.

If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent is required to collect them for a medical appointment, they must sign out at the school office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents must notify the school in advance.

### **Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)**

Schools, not parents, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Headteacher/Principal. The Head/Principal or other nominated staff member in their absence is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

We ask that parents/carers make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for reasons of ill health in order that the school can keep records updated and importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness.

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher/Principal or other nominated member of staff in their absence, in advance.

### **Levels of attendance**

The school will contact the parent/carer(s) of the child if there are emerging attendance concerns. If attendance does not improve, the school will contact the local authority in accordance with local authority procedures.

**Version control:**

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