

# Attendance Policy

## March 2023

Policy written by:	Moira Robertson, head teacher, Abbeyhill Primary School			Date: March 2023
Date Agreed with Staff	March 2023	Date agreed with Parent Council	2023	Consultation: Staff, Parents
Start date.	April 2023	Review Date	Annual- August	

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

*ARTICLE 28 – The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*

**Our school Purpose:** - The more we learn the brighter we shine.

**Our Vision :-** Abbeyhill, a welcoming, nurturing, safe and inclusive place for everyone to grow, develop and reach their potential.

**Our Aims:**

<b><u>Our Nursery</u></b>	<b><u>Our School</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <b>Our children feel loved and secure in an environment encouraging independence and creativity.</b></li><li>❖ <b>Our children are encouraged to explore and make choices to develop their learning and interests.</b></li><li>❖ Encourage an ethos of kindness, respect and equity with every child accepted for their own abilities and strengths.</li><li>❖ We value, respect and celebrate diversity and understand wellbeing is important.</li><li>❖ Our children will know their Rights and have confidence to express their views and opportunities to make a difference.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Every child is accepted for their own abilities and strengths.</li><li>❖ Encourage an ethos of kindness, respect and equity.</li><li>❖ We value, respect and celebrate diversity and understand wellbeing is important.</li><li>❖ Our curriculum is creative, stimulating and accessible as we learn in school and beyond</li><li>❖ Our children will know their Rights and have confidence to express their views</li><li>❖ We use mistakes to help us learn and encourage everyone to keep trying</li></ul>

**Our Policy in context**

This policy does not stand alone and is written in conjunction with the following key guidance and policy documents from both a local and national perspective:

*Attendance & Absence Procedures – City of Edinburgh Council (2020)*

*Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Promoting and Managing School Attendance – The Scottish Government (2019)*

*School Attendance: A Guide for Parents – The Scottish Government (2009)*

*Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) – The Scottish Government (2013)*

*The Education (Scotland) Act – The Scottish Government (2016)*

*Inter - Agency Child Protection Procedures – Edinburgh & The Lothians (2012)*

*The Children and Young Person (Scotland) Act – The Scottish Government (2014)*

### Overview

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the continuous education of all our pupils. Staff at Abbeyhill Primary School seek to inspire every child with a passion for learning which will demonstrate to them that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. School will take appropriate and proportionate action, when necessary, in order to promote school attendance.

At Abbeyhill Primary School, we know that every day counts in a child's education and we all strive to support our children to, where possible, attend our school on time, every day. All adults in our school have a role to play in promoting, managing and supporting school attendance. Here is how we all have a role to play:

<b>Our Role(s)</b>	<b>Our Responsibility</b>
<b>All Our Staff</b>	Reinforce importance of coming to school and being on time. Noticing if pupils are absent, missing activities or late. Praising good attendance, particularly of those who we know do not always attend or may often be late in. Never ask a child publicly why they have not been in school or why they are late. There may be a reason for this that the child would feel embarrassed or singled out in saying. Never make any comment to the child that attendance and late coming is 'their fault'.
<b>Our School Admin / Our Office Staff</b>	Warmly welcoming our pupils when arriving late, sympathetically asking for a reason, if appropriate to see if any support is needed. Inform school management, where appropriate.

	<p>Communicating with families to confirm the whereabouts of pupils as part of completion of the daily registration processes.</p> <p>Updating SEEMIS with TBC / Medical / Absence information</p> <p>Send out Seemis text to any TBC.</p>
<b>Our Teachers</b>	<p>Recording any absences in the register and sending it to the office by 9.15am.</p> <p>Ensuring pupils have the opportunity to talk privately if they wish to.</p> <p>Discussing attendance with parents and carers, where appropriate, in relation to progress in learning.</p> <p>Inform Senior Leadership Team of any patterns of attendance or late-coming, especially if this is new or out of character.(Appendix 6)</p>
<b>Our Pupil Support Officer</b>	<p>Monitor attendance of identified children and children in P1 -3. Have supportive conversations with families where there are regular absences or lates and look for ways of improving school attendance.</p> <p>Work closely with School Senior Management and engage as part of any supports that need to be put in place. Meet with our EWO termly to discuss below 85% and actions and supports that may be required.</p> <p>Support children with wider opportunities and attendance at after school clubs.</p>
<b>Pupil Support Assistant</b>	
<b>Our Head Teacher / SLT</b>	<p>Sharing the importance of good attendance regularly with parents, school website, social media and parental events.</p> <p>Meet with our PSO fortnightly to look at attendance statistics and lates.</p> <p>Meet with our EWO termly to discuss below 85% and actions and supports that may be required.</p> <p>Constructively inform, communicate and discuss with families about the reasons for absence or late-coming and how the school and partner agencies may be able to help them.</p> <p>Send 'trigger' letters to families below 90% attendance.</p>

We Aim:

- ✓ To maximise the attendance of all our children
- ✓ To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone.
- ✓ To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.

- ✓ To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- ✓ To work closely with and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and multi-agency teams within the GIRFEC procedures. The school understands that there can be additional reasons for a child's non-attendance at school, as set out in *Attendance & Absence Procedures – City of Edinburgh Council (2020) – Section 9 'Identifying and addressing barriers to attendance'*.

#### What is reasonably expected of our parents and carers?

- To keep their child's absences to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a positive mindset to learn.
- A reason should be offered for any lateness and appropriate and proportionate support accepted when this is an issue.
- To work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any issues that may impede a child's attendance.
- To be aware of the curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to how sporadic attendance can affect a child's progress.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.
- To keep the school updated should contact numbers or address details change.

#### What is expected of us, as a school by our Local Authority:

- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- To develop procedures that enable our school to identify, follow up and record authorised and unauthorised absence, patterns of absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- To consistently record absence within the guidance of *The Education (Scotland Act (2016)* and City of Edinburgh Council procedures.
- To develop a range of strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- To encourage supportive and constructive communication between home and school.
- To develop procedures that could lead to a referral to the EWO for family support from The Area Attendance Advisory Group (AAAG) to help families ensure good attendance of their child at school.
- Support children in why they are experiencing difficulty in attending school, offer a tailored or bespoke curriculum that focuses on their interests and needs.
- Through the school's *Equality & Anti-Bullying Policy*, promote an ethos of inclusion and equality where diversity and equality is celebrated and embraced and children feel comfortable to attend school.

#### EXAMPLES AND DEFINITIONS OF ABSENCE

Full definitions of the main definitions of absence and their recording are included in the *Attendance & Absence Procedures – City of Edinburgh Council (2020) – Pages 7 – 10*.

These should be referred to if staff are unsure what code to use to register a child's absence as during registration. A full breakdown of these codes is contained within the same above policy.

### LATENESS

School starts at 8.50 am for P3-P7 and 8.55 am for Primary 1 and 2. The Breakfast Club is open from 8.00am.

Lateness is classed as any child arriving after the class lines are inside at around 8.55/9.00 am

All children arriving after the lines are in must report to the school office and will be recorded on SEEMIS as being late for school.

The school registers are completed on SEEMIS from 9.30 am. Follow up attendance texts will be sent out from around 9.30am each school day.

Lateness is monitored on a fortnightly basis and letters are sent home to the parents and carers informing them of the disruption caused to the child and the class as a whole. If the lateness is persistent, then the school will seek to meet or speak with parents and carers to discuss our concerns. Cases of persistent lateness may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

### **The Role of The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) & Service**

We work together with the Education Welfare Service to improve the attendance of all our children. Our target attendance for each academic year is above 95% and whilst most of our children achieve this, there are a small minority who do not. The school can offer a wide range of supports for families to ensure children are in school and happy when they are. The school will offer a meeting to families to discuss these and solutions that can be put in place. There are also a range of different strategies that can be used by the Education Welfare Service to support families and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. These range from written notifications to home visits or referrals to external support agencies.

### **Persistent Absentees**

A child who has an attendance figure of 85% or below from frequent/sporadic or unexplained absences, is classed as a persistent absentee and will be referred to the EWO.

A child who has an attendance percentage falling between 85% and 95% will be closely monitored and supported to prevent them falling into the persistent absentee category. Reminder letters or phone calls to families can be considered if attendance starts to fall. They may be referred to the EWO and the school may also request medical evidence for further absences as this can be classed as a Child Protection issue.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

*The City of Edinburgh Absence & Attendance Procedure* asks schools to consider the following:

How will the effectiveness of the strategies used be evaluated?

When will the monitoring and evaluation take place?  
Who will be involved and how will they contribute?

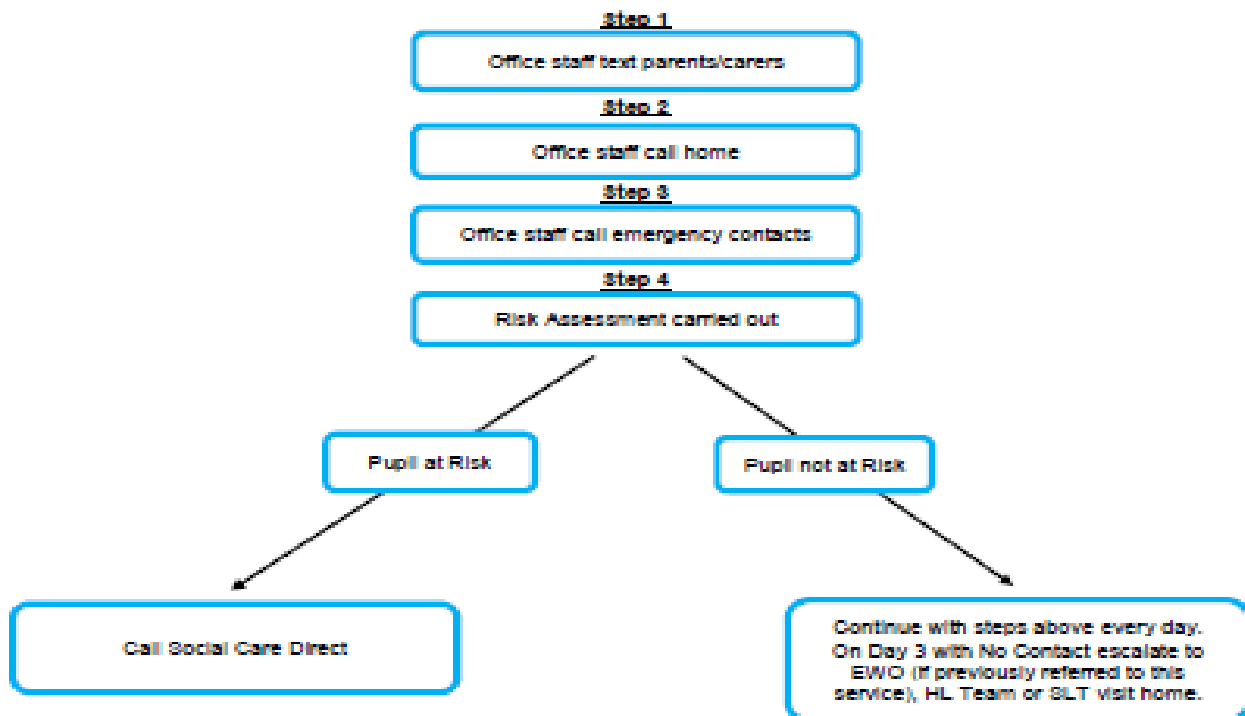
The school deals with daily absences and SEEMIS absence recording using the flowchart in Appendix 3 of the above document (See Appendix 1 below) where appropriate. For some identified families, unexplained absences are followed up by the PSO.

The school screens and monitors persistent attendance and late-coming using the guide in Appendix 5 of the above document. (See Appendix 2 below)  
The school's Head Teacher and PSO meet with the EWO on a termly basis and those children identified as below 85% are discussed. Agreements on monitoring, supports and interventions are put in place, where required.

The Local Authority publishes monthly attendance overviews for all its schools. This provides a guide to where a school is on a citywide basis and documents any improvements they have made.

From SEEMIS, the school draws a termly report, which is compiled to focus on Attendance below 85% and late-coming.  
Letters are then sent out to the families of those children who have been identified and a record of these and any parental responses are kept. These template letters are noted in Appendices 3,4 and 5 of this policy below.

As a school, we realise that there are other patterns and modes of school attendance that may need to be put in place or requested by families that are acceptable by law. These can be discussed between school and families using the *GIRFEC* structures and suitable arrangements made. The school or external agencies can advise families on their rights in these areas and support them accordingly. The school can also seek advice from our own Local Authority and external agencies, where required to.

**APPENDIX 1****Appendix 3****Unexplained Pupil Absence in Primary School**

Definition: Procedure – An agreed method or approach to comply with Policy, Legislation and Departmental Decisions.

This document may be out of date if printed, the latest version is available on the Council Intranet.

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The more we learn, the brighter we shine.





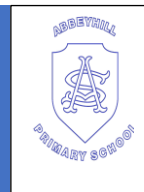
**APPENDIX 2**

**Appendix 5 Staged Support to Promote Attendance and Manage Absence**



Identifying and responding to concerns about attendance	
Pathways to Support	Action to be taken/Who and How
Stage 5 Complex/ Intensive/ Acute	Direct Referral to Reporter/ Attendance Order (served on parent through AAAG only)
Stage 4	Area Attendance Advisory Group (AAAG only in consultation with EWO after appropriate work being carried out)
Stage 3 Unexplained absence persists	Multi-agency assessment, planning and review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information gathering - use of GIRFEC tools and profile of attendance difficulties</li> <li>Solution-focused planning meeting involving pupil and parents</li> <li>Identify and implement appropriate intervention</li> <li>Review progress and update action plan</li> </ul>
Stage 2 Unexplained absence <85% attendance rate Persistent lates without parental support	Referral to EWO/ On-going involvement of Pupil Support Staff Individualised planning
Stage 1 Lates and occasional unexplained absence	Action taken by Head Teacher/Pupil Support Staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor attendance data regularly</li> <li>Discuss concerns with pupil and parent at earliest opportunity</li> <li>Unexplained absence should result in absence enquiry letter to parents with contact details of member of staff who can offer support. NB Standard letters are available on SEEMIS which can be adapted by schools.</li> </ul>
Promoting School Attendance for all pupils to ensure they are Included, engaged and Involved Promoting positive parental involvement    Pastoral support    health and well-being Positive behaviour approaches – restorative practice, solution-orientated schools    Reward systems Learner engagement    curricular flexibility    links with FE and voluntary organisations Playground supervision    Buddying and mentoring systems	

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### **APPENDIX 3**



#### **ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Dear N,

The register printout shows that N has a pattern of broken weeks of attendance.

Since the start of term, they have a **percentage attendance of ??%**. This is well below the accepted level which in primary school should be above 90%.

Poor attendance has been linked to lower levels of attainment; peer relationships and emotional and behaviour difficulties. Low levels of attendance can also be linked to how connected children and young people feel to their school community.

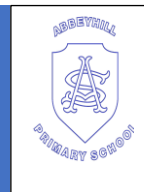
Missing just 10% of school is the equivalent of 4 weeks out of a school year.

Should you wish to discuss any aspects of this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Moira Robertson  
Head Teacher

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**APPENDIX 4**



**PERSISTENT LATE COMING**

Pupil(s):

Class:

Dear N,

The register printout shows that your child, N has a continued and persistent pattern of arriving late at school.

Since the start of the school year, N has been late N times.

All absence from school or lateness should be explained by phone call or through our Attendance Management Service (Option 1 on the school phone number).

Late-coming can have an impact on how children are emotionally prepared for a school day. It can also be very unsettling for a child when they enter school late.

If the school can help in any way to support you in getting your child to school, then please contact us.

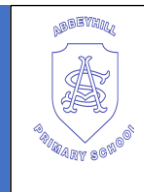
A copy of this correspondence has been added to the file of your child for future support and reference if, necessary.

A print out on your child's attendance is also enclosed for you to check.

Yours sincerely,

Moira Robertson  
Head Teacher

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APPENDIX 5



ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Dear N,

The register print shows that your child N has a pattern of broken weeks attendance at school and that Friday attendance is a particular issue.

Since starting the new session, your child has missed N Fridays as absent from school.

All absence from school should be explained by phone call or through our Attendance Management Service (Option 1 on the school phone number).

Poor attendance has been linked to lower levels of attainment; peer relationships and emotional and behaviour difficulties. Low levels of attendance can also be linked to how connected children and young people feel to their school community.

Missing just 10% of school is the equivalent of 4 weeks out of a school year.

A copy of this letter will be added to the school file of your child for future support and reference, if required.

A print out on your child's attendance is also enclosed for you to check.

Yours sincerely,

Moira Robertson  
Head Teacher

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APPENDIX 6



**PUPIL ATTENDANCE – CONCERN REFERRAL SLIP – ALL STAFF**

PUPIL NAME: ..... CLASS: .....



REASON FOR ATTENDANCE CONCERN: .....

**ACTION TAKEN & FOLLOW UP BY SCHOOL AS A RESULT OF THE CONCERN**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**FURTHER ACTION / REFERRALS REQUIRED (IF APPROPRIATE)**

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.....  
.....  
.....

On completion, this form should be placed in pupil's file for possible future reference.

The more we learn, the brighter we shine.



Abbeyhill primary School HomeLearning policy

*The more we learn, the brighter we shine.*



*The more we learn, the brighter we shine.*

**Ready**

**Respectful**

**Responsible**