ATTENDANCE POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that we work in partnership in ensure that all children attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Learning

Any absence effects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring all children regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility of the school, parents and carers and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- *Attendance*
- *Behaviour Management*
- *Health and Safety*
- *Access to the Curriculum*
- *Anti-bullying*

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis could be considered as a safeguarding matter.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular reports and this can be obtained by phone or email
- Report to you at the end of term on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels

across the school.

The Law Relating to Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that '*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*
(a) To age, ability and aptitude and
(b) To any special educational needs he/ she may have
Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law Relating to Safeguarding

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 students under the age of 18.

During any unforeseen periods of time such as the Covid 19 crisis, the school will follow government guidance and, if necessary, mark a student as attending even though they may be working remotely. There will be a designated grade stamp on the official register (in Arbor) for these periods.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to West Sussex Education team using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

When a child is on a part time timetable, this may be for a multitude of reasons, the code C2 will be used on the register docs.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our registration system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Governors have access to the attendance rates and, at times and as and when necessary, may intervene in the monitoring of certain pupils

Amberley Court School (ACS) does offer placement to past school refusers and will work in partnership with local authorities, social services and any other stakeholder in order to enhance attendance.

Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the SA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our registration system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Governors have access to the attendance rates and, at times and as and when necessary, may intervene in the monitoring of certain pupils

Amberley Court School (ACS) does offer placement to past school refusers and will work in partnership with local authorities, social services and any other stakeholder in order to enhance attendance.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent parents should:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence
- If the child is absent for more than 5 days without prior consent from the school, then a GP or illness letter can be asked for

If a child is absent we may:

- Telephone or text the parent or guardian on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them;
- Invite parents or guardians in to discuss the situation with our Head teacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the local authority Education Attendance Officer (Pupil Entitlement) and/or a relevant social services designate if attendance moves below the school target of **90%.**

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Therefore we will need help to enable us help a child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer

Parents or guardians are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from Local Authority Pupil Entitlement team. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents, guardians or children may wish to contact the parent advice service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority directly.

The Attendance Officer at Amberley Court School is the School Secretary.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **9.00am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.30am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **10.00am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you may be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance, to the Headteacher, and may, or may not, be granted at the discretion of the school. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is a very important time as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (85%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

SCHOOL TARGETS

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets as it will also affect our overall figures.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. The national expectation is that pupils will attend school for over 90% of the school year and we must work towards achieving this target.

We are aware that for some of our students' school has not always been straightforward for them in the past. However, our target is to achieve better than 90% because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils need consistency and support to grow and develop.

Each term, all students with 100% attendance will be put forward to receive reward tokens to celebrate their success.

POSITION	Headteacher	**NAME**	**James Eagle**	**SIGNATURE**	***J Eagle***	**DATE**	**01/09/2026**
POSITION	Governor	**NAME**	**Dave Johns**	**SIGNATURE**	***D Johns***	**DATE**	**01/09/2026**
POSITION		**NAME**		**SIGNATURE**		**DATE**	

APPENDIX

ACS
Pupil Holiday Request Form

It is a legal requirement for parents/carers to obtain the permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school in order to take a holiday during term time. Parents **do not** have an automatic right to take their children out of school for holidays during term time and may be issued with a Penalty Notice if they do so without prior arrangement with the Headteacher.

Parents wishing to apply for their child to be granted leave from school should **complete this form and return it to school for consideration before booking and well in advance of the proposed leave**. Upon receipt of a request the Headteacher will make a decision as to whether to authorise the absence, being mindful of government regulations and LA guidance. The legislation only allows the Headteacher to authorise such leave in special or exceptional circumstances. By definition, special or exceptional trips should not occur regularly. Therefore, it is not expected that holiday leave will be requested on an annual basis.

For leave of more than 10 school days in duration, or when school have concerns about the leave request, the Headteacher or their representative will arrange to meet with you to discuss your application. Please see overleaf for factors that will be taken into account by school when considering a request for leave.

PARENT / CARERS SECTION
(Please attach additional sheets if necessary)

Surname of child:		First Name of child:	
Date of Birth:		Year Group:	
Surname of parent/carer:		First name:	
Relationship to child:		Are there any siblings applying for leave?	
Home address:			
Postcode:		Telephone number:	
Please state why leave must be taken during term time instead of during school holiday periods			
Length of absence : (number of days in school)		Destination:	
Date of departure:		Date due back in school:	

Emergency UK telephone contact name and number:		Other emergency contact details, if leave is outside the UK	

Employer Details
If you are stating work commitments as a reason for requesting leave, please complete this section and attach any evidence you have showing why leave cannot be taken during the school holidays.

Name:	
Address	
Telephone:	

Parent/carer's signature: **Date of Application:**

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Regular attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. The Local Authority expects that all parents/carers ensure their children attend school whenever possible. Absence during school time hinders academic progress. The following factors should be taken into account when considering an application for leave:

- *Will leave at this point in time be detrimental to the pupil's education?*
- *Will he/she miss any national tests or examinations?*
- *Is his/her attendance already below 90% or a previously agreed target?*
- *Is the proposed absence during the month of September or any other transition period?*
- *Has he/she already had leave during term time this year?*
- *Did he/she have leave of absence during term time in the previous school year?*
- *Does he/she have any absences which have been recorded as unauthorised this year?*

SCHOOL SECTION:

Date application received: Pupil's % Attendance:

Date of meeting with parent(s): (if applicable) SIMS/STAR ethnicity code:

Gender of child:

Male	Female

About the request: (Please circle)

Leave request approved?	**Yes**	**No**
Parent(s) informed of potential consequences of taking unauthorised leave	**Yes**	**No**
Is leave in excess of 10 days?	**Yes**	**No**
Parent(s) informed of potential consequences of failure to return on due date?	**Yes**	**No**

Reason(s) for decision:

Number of previous applications granted:

Headteacher's signature: **Date:**

Please return a copy of this form to the parent/carer after consideration

In cases where leave has been authorised by the school, parents/carers may wish to keep this letter of authorisation with them as evidence if they are challenged by an attendance/police officer during a truancy sweep