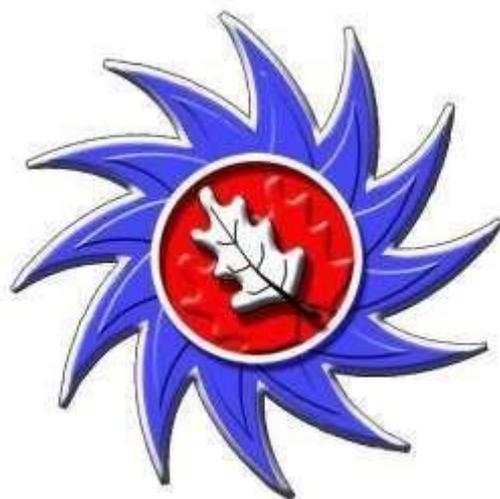


# ACKLAM GRANGE SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy 2020-2021

Status & Review Cycle	Term	Year
Last Review Date/Policy Adopted	Autumn Term	2020-2021
Next Review Date	Autumn Term	2021-2022
Lead	Mrs Gowland	

This school is an academy within The Legacy Learning Trust.

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **Acklam Grange School**

### **Introduction:**

Acklam Grange School 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. As a school we will work closely with our parent/carers, our attendance team and the Local Authority to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you information on attendance in our regular *parent mailing/newsletter*, our school website, twitter account, Facebook account, parent text, letter and meeting where appropriate.
- Provide you with reports termly at Key Stage 3 and half termly at Key Stage 4 on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;

- Reward good or improving attendance through individual and tutor competitions, certificates and trips/outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine 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 the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (i.e. condoned absence)
- truancy 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, birthdays
- any other leave of absence 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 should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers 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.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance drops below 90% at any point during the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all student 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 students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where necessary. All our PA students and their parents/carers are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through an in-school keyworker, referral to external agencies, parental meeting engagement, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities

around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to our Education Welfare Officer, the attendance and pastoral team.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Contact us throughout the duration of your child's absence to keep us up to date with their progress;
- When your child returns to school it is important that they ring a note of explanation for the attendance team which contains an explanation of the absence. This will enable us to support your child's needs – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you either then or at a later point.
- For further guidance on how you can support your child in maintaining good attendance please follow this link;

NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence (*and on each subsequent day*) if we have not heard from you;
- Telephone or write to you to if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our *Education Welfare Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Headteacher* if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the local authority if attendance is a concern.
- In some circumstances, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken by our Educational Welfare Officer or Student Welfare Officer These circumstances include;
  - Absence of two full days ***without contact from parent or carer***
  - Concern for the welfare of a student
  - Prolonged absence which is explained and evidenced

The purpose of such visits is to support and assist parents / students reintegration to school as soon as is practically possible. Home visits are ordinarily conducted by our Education

Welfare Officer, Student Welfare Officer or a Police Officer dependent upon our level of concern.

- Your child will be reported as 'Child missing in education' (CME) if we have not been able to make contact before the 20 day deadline, or at any point before if we are concerned about your child's welfare.

NB; Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, therefore up to date contact details are imperative. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number and at least one additional contact. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **Local Authority Involvement:**

Parents/carers are expected to contact school prior to or at the outset of any absence and work collaboratively with school staff to resolve issues together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to Middlesbrough Local Authority via an Attendance Case Conference who will support school in providing additional support 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 Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of leave of absence that has not been authorised by the school.)

Click on the following link to read Middlesbrough Local Authority guidance regarding fixed penalty notices:

<https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance/school-attendance-fines-penalty-notices>

Click on the following link to read Middlesbrough Local Authority Guidance regarding court procedures:

<https://middlesbrough.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance/court-procedures-school-attendance>

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the LA 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 Education Authority on (01642) 201846.

### **Punctuality:**

We aim to equip all students with the skills and routines necessary for success in further education and employment, punctuality is a key to this. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and vital contact with teachers to obtain vital information and news

for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, causing embarrassment for the child and if left unchallenged can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage poor punctuality:**

**The school is open from 8am every morning for breakfast club and enrichment sessions. All children are welcome on the school site from this time.**

The school day starts at **8.30 am** and we expect your child to be in class at **8.40 am** for registration. A pre-registration bell rings on the central courtyard to allow students a few minutes to get to their tutor family room on time. Legal registers are marked at **8.40 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in school at that time.

At **10.00 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time without a valid reason or appropriate evidence, 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.

Registers remain open until 10am to ensure alignment of registration of onsite and offsite students.

If your child has a persistent lateness record you will be asked to meet with a member of the Attendance Team or your child's Year Leader to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Leave of absence in Term Time:**

Taking a leave of absence in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by avoiding taking them away in school time. There is **no automatic entitlement** in law to time off in school time to go on any leave of absence.

All applications for leave must be made at least 10 school days in advance of the planned absence, which will then be considered by the Headteacher. Only absences requested under exceptional circumstances will be considered for authorisation. In making a decision, the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Leave of absence requests submitted retrospectively cannot be considered or authorised.

Circumstances to consider before submitting a leave of absence:

- When a student is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods, during GCSE or any other public examinations.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.

- Where a student's attendance rate is already below 96% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

### **Action following unauthorised leave of absence:**

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to parents.

If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parents are guilty of an offence under section 444 Education Act 1996.

Any unauthorised absences may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

The issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted for the offence given above. The fine is for £60.00 if paid within 3 weeks, going up to £120.00 if paid between 3 to 4 weeks.

### **School targets, projects and special initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The Attendance target for the school for 2019/20 is 96%.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our *assemblies, school website, Twitter and Facebook accounts, parent mailing/newsletter*.

### **Student Registration**

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity

<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Leave of absence (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Leave of absence (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	school closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

### Security of registers

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years. The registers must be safely stored.

### Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Deputy Headteacher  
Assistant Headteacher  
Data and Information Manager for Attendance  
Education Welfare Officer  
Administrative Attendance Support Officer  
Year Office staff

## **Legal duty**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.