POLICY TITLE:	Attendance
Policy Number:	ACS61
Applies to:	All English and Scottish Schools and Colleges
Version Number:	V03
Date of Issue:	05/08/2024
Date of Review:	31/08/2025
Author:	Charlie Rivers – Head of Quality (Education)
Ratified by:	Charlie Rivers – Head of Quality (Education)
Responsible signatory:	Jane Stone – Director of Governance and Risk
Outcome:	This policy aims to ensure that all Aspris schools/colleges meet their statutory requirements with regards to recording and reporting school/college attendance.
Cross Reference:	AOP06 Safeguarding Children in Education AOP06B Safeguarding Children in Education – Wales AOP06F Safeguarding Children in Fostering Services ACS04 Positive Behaviour Support ACS04A Positive Behaviour Support - Wales

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Aspris is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, email
AsprisGovernanceHelpdesk@Aspris.com.

Attendance

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In order to effectively implement this policy, each Aspris school/college will have local procedures in place where necessary, which explain how this policy is applied and put into practice at school/college level.

1.2 Template **ACS LP 61** is provided for this purpose and includes a key content checklist.

1.3 This policy should be used in conjunction with the related policies listed on the preceding page where applicable.

2 AIMS

2.1 Aspris is committed to ensuring that all schools/colleges both meet their statutory obligations pertaining to attendance whilst also promoting a culture and ethos that values good attendance. This includes:
- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school/college
- Promoting and supporting punctuality with regard to attendance in lessons

3 OVERVIEW

3.1 Although not statutory for the non-maintained sector, this policy meets the requirements of 'Working together to improve school/college attendance' (latest version) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's Statutory Guidance - School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (Jan 2015)

4 SCOPE

4.1 This policy applies to all English and Scottish schools/colleges within the Education division.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 **The Regional Director** (as Chair of Governors) is responsible for:
- Promoting the importance of attendance across the school/college's Local Procedures and ethos
- Making sure school/college leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school/college against the company and national average
- Making sure colleagues receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher/college lead to account for the implementation of this policy

5.2 **The Head Teacher/College Lead** is responsible for:
- Implementation of this policy at the school/college
- Monitoring school/college level absence data and reporting concerns to governance
- Supporting colleagues with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Ensuring that key information pertaining to pupils absent data, and strategies that have worked/failed is passed onto new education providers when a pupil moves on

5.3 **The designated Member of Senior Leadership Team**
The school/college must have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. Specifically they are responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Having a strong grasp of attendance data
- Leading attendance across the school/college and not focusing on attendance in isolation of other areas such as, anti-bullying culture and curriculum
- Challenging parents misconceptions about what good attendance is, and ensuring they understand the links between attendance and future academic achievement
- Communicating expectations to pupils and the positive links between attendance and future plans
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school/college colleagues and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher/college lead
- Working with Local Authority officers to tackle persistent absence
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

5.4   **The Class Teachers/College Tutors** are responsible for:
- Recording pupil/student attendance on the electronic recording system on a daily basis, using the correct DfE codes

5.5   **Designated School/College Colleagues** are responsible for:
- Taking calls from parents/carers absence on a day-to-day basis and ensuring that whoever is recording attendance on the electronic recording system has the relevant information in order that the correct code can be entered
- Where appropriate, transferring calls from parents/carers to the necessary person (see School/College Local Procedure) in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

5.6   **Parents/carers** are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every (day/timetabled session) on time
- Call the school/college to report their child's absence before established time (see Local Procedure) on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school/college with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school/college day

5.7   **Pupils** are expected to:
- Attend school/college every day (according to individualised curriculum) on time

6   RECORDING ATTENDANCE

6.1   All schools/colleges must use the company electronic reporting system to record attendance and ensure that all pupils are placed onto this register

6.2   All schools/colleges must take their attendance register at the start of the first session of each school/college day and once during the afternoon session utilising the DfE attendance codes (see p55 Working together to improve school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities Published: 29 August 2024). It must mark whether every pupil is:
- Present
- Attending an approved off-service educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

6.3   Any amendment to the attendance register must include:
- The original entry

- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

6.4   All schools must also record:
- (For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not
- If a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

6.5   Schools/colleges Local Attendance Procedure must detail
- The time at which pupils must arrive in school/college
- The time at which the register for both the first and second session will be taken
- The amount of time the register will be kept open in both sessions

7   UNPLANNED ABSENCE

7.1   The pupil/student's parent/carer must notify the school/college of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by XXXX (time determined by Local Procedure) or as soon as practically possible

7.2   The school/college must mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless they have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness

7.3   Where the absence is longer than xxxx days (number determined by Local Procedure) or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school/college can ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence

7.4   If the school/college is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence can be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance

8   PLANNED ABSENCE

8.1   Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil/student's parent/carer notifies the school/college in advance of the appointment. School/college's should encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school/college hours where possible. Where this is not possible, school/college's should request that the pupil/student should be out of school/college for the minimum amount of time necessary.

8.2   The pupil's parent/carer should also be encouraged to apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 12 below details which term-time absences the school/college can authorise

9   LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY

9.1   A pupil/student who arrives late:
- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

9.2   The school/college Local Procedure will detail how the school/college will identify and respond to ongoing punctuality issues

10   FOLLOWING UP UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

10.1   Where any pupil/student expected to attend school/college does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school/college is expected to:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school/college cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school/college will follow what is detailed in their Local Procedure
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

11   REPORTING TO PARENTS/CARERS

11.1   Schools/colleges must regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels (details to be given in Local Procedure)

12   AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

12.1   <u>Approval for term-time absence</u>
The headteacher/college lead will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil/student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's/college lead's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school/college's Local Procedure will provide a description of what constitutes exceptional circumstances.

12.2   The school/college must consider each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request

12.3   Parents should be requested to submit any request for authorised absence as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, in accordance with any leave of absence request form (details pertaining to this to be contained in the school/college's Local Procedure). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence

12.4   Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
- Illness (including mental illness- see section 13 below) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school/college , but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

13   EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL/COLLEGE AVOIDANCE

13.1   The DfE guidance applies to any pupil displaying social, emotional, and mental health issues that are affecting their attendance and where reasonable adjustments need to be considered.

13.2   Schools/Colleges should put reasonable adjustments/plans in place to support parents when their child has difficulties with attendance. There should be a clear aim at improving attendance as much as possible and to support any underlying mental health issues.

13.3   Schools/Colleges should facilitate relevant pastoral support, and it is expected that through these difficulties that pupils still attend school/college .

13.4   If the pastoral support colleagues have identified that anxiety about attending is being driven by another medical need, then the school/college should work with the other relevant health professionals and parents/carers to review that support and consider putting in place or updating and individual Healthcare plan.

13.5   Schools/colleges should ensure that mental health absences are recorded as 'authorised', and there is no need to routinely ask for medical evidence; however, schools/colleges should seek advice in long term or repeated absences.

13.6   In exceptional circumstances and where it is in the pupils best interests, part time tables may be used and should seek to maximise face- to- face school/college time as much as possible. Where a pupil is well enough to complete remote education, schools/colleges should provide this to help pupils stay on track with the education they would normally receive.

14   PART TIME TIMETABLES (to include emotional based school/college avoidance)

14.1   DfE guidance is clear that part time timetables are not to be used as a way to manage behaviour, or as an alternative to exclusions.

14.2   There must be a clear rationale behind the reason for a pupil being placed on a part time timetable.

14.2   Part time timetables should not be open ended and should ensure a swift return to a full-time programme; therefore, schools/colleges need to ensure that part time timetables are time limited, and it is made explicit to both the pupil and parents when the pupil is expected to return to a full-time table.

14.2.1   The school/college should plan in regular review points of the arrangements with parents/carers.

14.2.2   The school/college should record a pupil with a part time timetable using the relevant DfE code (C2).

14.3   Schools/colleges need to ensure that they have recorded evidence that shows when the part time table was implemented, how the school/college is using strategies to build back up to a full-time timetable and what the thinking is around this.

15   STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

15.1   The school/college should have strategies for rewarding and improving attendance. These will be detailed in their Local Procedure.

15.2   The school/college should have appropriate people in place so that pupils have a constant point of contact.

15.3   The school/college should communicate expectations to parents/carers and pupils.

16   ATTENDANCE MONITORING

16.1   The school/college must monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. These will be detailed in their Local Procedure.

16.2   As a minimum the school/college must
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school/college and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

16.3   The school/college should compare attendance data with the national and company average and share this as part of reporting to Governance.

16.4   The school/college must:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

16.5   The school/college must use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

17   PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE

17.1   Persistent Absence is where absence escalates and a pupil/student misses 10% or more of school/college (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year). Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school/college.

17.2   The school/college must
- Alert parents early on (before dropping to 90%) with the school's/college's concerns
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence,
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils whom the school/college (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

17.3   The school/college's Local Procedure will provide details of further support in place to support/challenge pupils with persistent and severe absence.

17.4   To tackle persistent attendance, the school/college should follow the three main factors that secure good attendance, as set out in the DfE guidance, these are:

1. Patterns - systematically analysing data to identify the causes of what may be lying beneath the surface and to help break down barriers

2. Ambition - absence is everyone's business, praise small successes and break down expectations to make them more achievable

3. Governors - challenge schools/colleges to ensure that there is a sense of urgency and shared expectations

17.5   The school/college should carefully manage a pupils return to school/college , and motivate pupils by putting support in place to enable them to catch up.

Associated Forms:
ACS LP 61 Attendance

References:
Working together to improve school attendance (Current Version)
School attendance parental responsibility measures - January 2015
The Education Act 1996 Part 6
The Education Act 2002 Part 3
The Education and Inspections Act 2006 Part 7
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)
DfE Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
DfE Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance