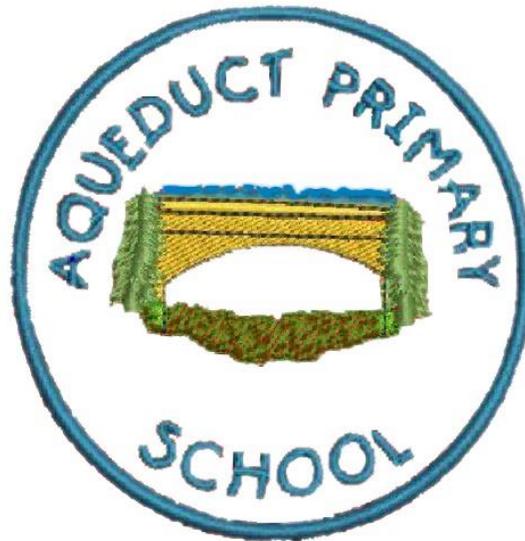


# Aqueduct Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



## 2015

Written/Reviewed	October 2015
Discussed and Agreed by Governing Body	November 2015
Discussed and Agreed by All Staff	
Next Review Date	November 2016

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Standards :**

**'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.**

**School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013**

Aqueduct Primary expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

## **Framework**

The framework for a whole-school attendance policy is based on the 5 „Ps“ - namely, Philosophy, Principles, Procedures, Performance and Practice.

## **Philosophy**

Aqueduct Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

Our policy is to celebrate our pupils' achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils.

We give high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a pupils attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly

focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

## **Principles**

The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law,
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,
- display attendance rates around the school and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils,
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence,
- consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the whole-school attendance policy,
  - ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by Senior Leaders and the School Governors,
  - send newsletters to parents and carers informing them of attendance rates and related issues, additionally update school website with any attendance related issues,
  - work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed,
  - have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

## **Procedures**

### **Lateness**

Staff greet pupils at 8.45 am. The school doors are shut at 8.55am. All pupils should be in class and ready for registration by 8.55am. Lateness is classed as any pupil coming into school between 8.55am and 9.20am. All children arriving after 8.55am must report to the office.

Formal lessons begin at 9.10 am., however, guided and individual reading takes place from 8.55am. Arrival at school after this point means that important learning is being missed. Persistent lateness is taken very seriously as it can have a detrimental effect on a pupil's progress. Arrival after 9.30am is classed as an unauthorised absence.

Lateness is monitored regularly with the school's Educational Welfare Officer.

### **Absence**

If no contact is received from the parents/carers for an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:

- follow "First day contact" procedures and contact the parent by telephone.
- refer to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to follow up absence if no response is received after 3 days and consider a referral to the "Children & Family Locality Services" or contact "Family Connect" if no contact can be made with the parent;
- invite the parents/carers into school for an "Attendance Concern Meeting" (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence, unless other action is planned. This meeting will include a senior member of staff, parent/carer and the school EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties that are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance
- help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include the appropriate members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible
- Contact **Family Connect 01952 385385** for further guidance on available support.

### **Leave during term time**

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. Holidays during term time will not be authorised.

- In very exceptional circumstances the Head teacher may authorise an absence from school for leave of absence. This would have to be agreed with the Head teacher prior to the leave taking place. Any exceptional circumstance would be viewed as an individual case and is entirely at the discretion of the Head teacher. (see appendix A)

**In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the**

**importance of their education.**

### **Performance**

It is important to set realistic targets for both attendance and persistent absence; these targets are set during the Autumn term of each academic year, in consultation with the Governing Body. The Governing Body must approve the school target for attendance to be set for the following academic year. The target is sent to the Group Manager, Admissions, Attendance and School Organisation once it has been agreed. In compiling an Action Plan, we look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

When evaluating success we consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Persistent absence has reduced
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absences has improved
- Re-integration plans have been successful
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

### **Practice**

The school recognises the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Liaising closely with the school's EWO, if appropriate
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages
- A signed copy of any correspondence is retained by the school
- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention

- Giving a weekly well done to the class that has the best attendance for the week during the weekly Achievement Assembly
- "Best Attendance" pencils are given to pupils in the class whose attendance is the best for that term
- 100% certificates are presented to individual pupils at the end of each term and at the end of a full academic year

### **Safeguarding**

Aqueduct School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This means that we have a Child Protection Policy and procedures in place which we refer to in our prospectus. All staff (including supply staff, volunteers and governors) must ensure that they are aware of these procedures. Families are welcome to read the Policy on the school website.

Our Designated Safeguard Leads (DSLs) are: Victoria Waring and Jo Clarke.

### **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PARENT REQUESTING LEAVE IN TERM TIME**

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send to the headteacher the tear off request form below. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any holiday booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision on their request. In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the departure date to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
2. The granting of leave of absence in school term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the school. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) and Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy is that family holidays should not be taken in school term time. Where such requests are made, for the leave to be granted, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances**.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
  - the exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
  - the age of the child;
  - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
  - the overall attendance pattern of the child;
  - the nature of the trip.

pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will not normally be granted leave of absence.

4. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.

5. Where requests for a grant of leave of absence are received from only one parent the response letter - agreeing or refusing - will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all „parents“ are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent will receive a penalty notice.

6. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence but, the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost**.

7. Should the School decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child. From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 this fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.

## APPENDIX ONE

### **Request for Leave during Term Time**

Date.....

**I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:**

my child (full name) ..... for the  
period from (date) ..... to (date) .....

**The exceptional circumstances and reason for this request are: -**

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

**I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows:**

**Child(ren) (full name(s) )** .....

**School(s) attended** .....

.....

Signature of 1<sup>st</sup> Parent/Carer .....Print Name.....

Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Carer.....Print Name.....

**Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.**

**For Office Use Only**

Current Attendance.....% Last Years Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time .....(this Academic Year)

**Agreed/Not Agreed**

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed ..... Date .....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent .....

## APPENDIX TWO

### **School Letter - Leave Not Agreed**

Date

Parent's name and address

Dear (Parents name)

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days), (dates).

As you may be aware the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Having looked at your application, although understanding of your reasons, I do not feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, if the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised.**

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings.

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

**The Headteacher has been fully consulted in relation to this request for leave and fully supports the decision made.**

Thank you for your understanding; I hope this letter explains the decision that has been made.  
Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

## APPENDIX THREE

### **School Letter - Leave Agreed**

Date

(Parents name and address)

Dear (Parents name) (Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days), (dates).

As you may be aware the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take holidays in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance.

**Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.**

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, in the future you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

**The Headteacher has been fully consulted in relation to this request for leave and fully supports the decision made.**

I hope this letter explains the reason for the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher