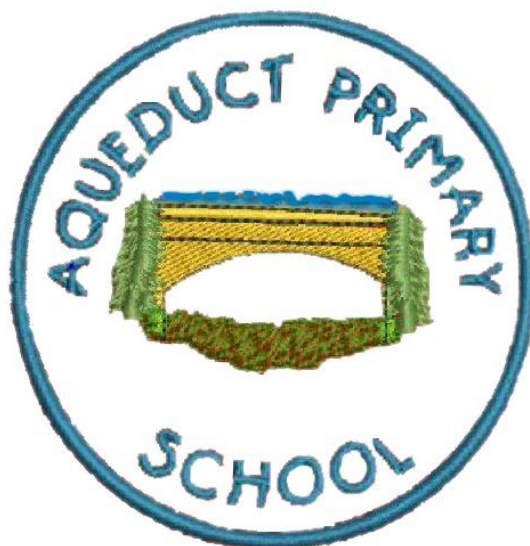


Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Written/Reviewed	September 2023
Next Review Date	September 2024

Our Strapline

Building tomorrow, Leading the way ...

Our Values

Positivity, happiness, learning, kindness, safety and respect.

A Framework for a Whole-School Attendance Policy

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 speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage the goal of at least 96 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents 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 which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at the pupil resuming full attendance and consistent punctuality.

Principles

The school will:

- ✓ ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and associated education law,
- ✓ complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- ✓ stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting school 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 and support 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 managers and the school governors,
- ✓ send regular newsletters to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues, additionally maintain and update information on the 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,
- ✓ take responsibility for Children Missing Education (CME), so that school are in regular contact with the pupil and parent, ensuring the pupils safety, working together so that the pupil can resume full time education,
- ✓ monitor and regularly review those pupils subject to a modified timetable, ensuring it is a short-term intervention and have a clear plan for reintegration back into full time attendance at school.

Procedures and expectations

Being on time is extremely important. If a pupil is late, it affects their learning and the learning of others.

Our school gates open at 8:35am and staff greet pupils on the door at 8:45am. The school doors are shut at 9:00am.

Lateness is classed as any pupil coming into school between 9:00 am and 9:30am

All children arriving after 9:00am must report to the office and sign in using the "Inventory" electronic signing in system by the main office.

Formal lessons begin at 9:00 am. 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 and will result in half a day's attendance being lost.

Lateness is monitored weekly by the Headteacher and Inclusion Support Manager and regularly with the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). When lateness becomes a concern, school will work with the EWO and late letters will be sent or parents will be invited into school to meet with a member of the school leadership team.

Absence

Should a child be unable to attend school, it is the expectation that the parent/carer contacts the school via telephone or e-mail before 9:00am to explain the reason for the absence before registers are taken.

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

- ✓ follow 'first day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone.
- ✓ Possibly conduct a home visit in line with our duty of care to determine the whereabouts of a child.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil after three days of unexplained absence, we will

- ✓ conduct a home visit or a referral to the EWO or both.
- ✓ consider sending a letter of concern if an explanation has still not been received after three days of unexplained absence or send a School Attendance Letter (SAL)
- ✓ refer to the school's 'Nominated Attendance Person' (NAP) or Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence and refer to the family social worker or to 'Family Connect' if there are additional concerns regarding the family and no contact can be made with the parent,

Where there are safeguarding or similar concerns regarding the pupil/family, additional services should be contacted immediately (e.g., social care, strengthening families or making a call to the police to conduct a safe and well check if there are any concerns about a pupil's whereabouts with no explanation.

We may also invite the parents into school for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil and the NAP/EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance,

We will do all we can to support the 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 a 'Reintegration Plan' can be implemented. The plan should include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupils needs as possible.

Performance

It is important to set realistic targets for both attendance and persistent absence; these targets will be 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 and will be recorded in the governing body minutes. Ideally, the target should be sent to the Attendance Support Team by the end of the autumn term at the latest. In compiling an 'Action Plan' the school will 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 absence has improved
- Re-integration plans, where implemented, have been successful
- There are specific key groups where a targeted approach is appropriate to raise attendance, e.g., children in receipt of pupil premium.
- 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 Development and Citizenship (PDC) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

Governors and senior leaders track school's performance through Analyse School Performance, Inspection Dashboard and through monitoring the attendance of all groups of pupils on a termly basis.

Practice

The school recognises the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Contacting parents on the first day of absence if no message has been given to school about the pupil's absence.
- Late and attendance letters sent home.
- Making leaflets accessible and on the school website giving the EWO contact details to parents if they need support.
- Regularly analysing attendance data & comparing it against both the local and national average and considering the performance of key groups in comparison to the national data for that particular group.
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages/email or contact from parents
- A signed copy of any correspondence to parents is retained by the school
- Providing a weekly 'Well done' to the class with the best attendance for the week during Monday's Achievement Assembly and displaying this in the hall.
- Providing 100% attendance certificates and prizes to individual pupils at the end of every term.
- Celebrating the attendance of each class on the school newsletter.

Authorised Absences

Only a school can authorise an absence. Parents and the LA do not have the power to authorise absences. The Headteacher has ultimate responsibility for the registers.

The key points schools consider when deciding to authorise absence are:

- it is a legal requirement that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly and punctually,
- a satisfactory explanation for every absence is required; if one is not forthcoming the absence should be treated as unauthorised,
- schools are not obliged to accept a parental explanation for pupil absence where there is doubt as to the validity of that explanation,
- parents should be aware that only the Headteacher has the discretion to agree to authorise any leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Each application for leave of absence should be considered in view of the specific circumstances of the family.
- schools should always expect regular and punctual attendance, even when the school is aware of family difficulties,
- minding the house, looking after siblings, shopping, or going on a trip will not normally be acceptable reasons for absence,
- where absence is authorised, schools should remain vigilant to emerging patterns of non-attendance,
- lateness should be actively discouraged, and persistent lateness treated in the same way as irregular attendance,
- schools should develop a close working relationship with the Attendance Support Team (AST) to promote regular school attendance and ensure access to all legal interventions where necessary.

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from an authorised representative of the school and includes all unexplained absences.

If a child is absent with the approval of the school, for whatever reason, no offence is deemed to have been committed. Thus, the decision taken by the school to give, or withhold, authorisation for an absence, is a critical factor in determining the LA's decision to prosecute parents.

We as a school are encouraged to exercise caution in the authorisation of absence.

Lateness

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late after the register closes are guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if excessive late arrival is unresolved.

Persistent lateness can be as damaging to a pupil's school career as persistent absence. Pupils who arrive late disrupt not only their own education but that of others and being persistently late may also lead to truancy.

We aim to work with the school community to develop incentive schemes to reward and encourage punctuality.

The Role of the Attendance Support Team

The Attendance Support Team (AST) form part of the Telford & Wrekin Councils support services to schools and liaise where appropriate with school staff to help secure pupils' good attendance.

Legal action to enforce attendance can only be taken by the LA.

The AST provide a service to schools and support legal intervention to improve school attendance. AST will normally liaise with the appropriate Senior Leader or the Nominated Attendance Person (NAP). However, attendance is the responsibility of the whole school. Schools should, therefore, consider the most effective ways of giving all staff access to advice and training delivered by AST to ensure an understanding of the LA's responsibilities.

The LAs Policy for Prosecution is as follows:-

The parent(s) of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to achieve regular attendance will be considered for Court proceedings unless there are extenuating circumstances. All referrals will be considered and discussion between AST and school staff encouraged.

All parents must be given sufficient notification of their children's attendance via the serving of official warning notices.

After communication with the LA legal team, if it is decided to initiate legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court, the AST officers will work with the school staff to produce the necessary witness statement and appropriate supporting evidence.

The LA is responsible for all aspects of the procedure. In Telford & Wrekin this duty is delegated to the Attendance Support Team. A summons will be issued and served in accordance with the requirements of the respective Magistrates Clerks and a representative from the AST will attend court and present the prosecution case on behalf of the Local Authority. In certain circumstances legal services will ensure a Council Solicitor is made available to present cases on behalf of the Local Authority, e.g., not guilty pleas and contested cases.

A certificate signed by the Headteacher confirming the contents of the child's school attendance register during the period of prosecution referred to in the summons will be required as documentary evidence by the court.

N.B. Only unauthorised absences can be used in evidence.

Holiday Penalty Notice

Schools can request a Holiday Penalty Notice when a pupil has had leave of absence during term time and accumulated 10 consecutive unauthorised sessions (5 days) during term time, not agreed by the school. Schools should complete the AST Referral Form and send it to attendancesupportteam@telford.gov.uk.

If appropriate evidence is provided AST will issue a Penalty Notice. N.B. No warning will be issued if a Holiday Penalty Notice is requested by schools and agreed by AST.

For any other enquiry regarding school attendance please contact the Attendance Support Team on (01952) (3)85220 or email attendancesupportteam@telford.gov.uk

Appendices attached below:

Guidance notes for parents for requesting leave in term time

2). Request for Leave during term time sample form

3). Leave in term time refusal: good example letter

<u>Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)</u>	
<u>Louise Aubrey</u>	<u>Safeguarding linked Governor</u> <u>(Chair of Governors)</u>
<u>Tammy Lockley</u>	<u>Supervising DSL</u>
<u>Jo Clarke</u>	<u>Lead DSL (DHT)</u>
<u>Ash Palin</u>	<u>Deputy DSL (Assistant Head)</u>
<u>Cara Duppa</u>	<u>Deputy DSL (EYFS Lead)</u>
<u>Lisa Batchelor</u>	<u>Deputy DSL (Inclusion Support Manager)</u>



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Aqueduct Primary School
Castlefields Way
Aqueduct, Telford, TF4 3RP



01952 386210

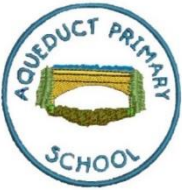


A2175@taw.org.uk

Headteacher: Mrs T Lockley
Chair of Governors: Mrs L Aubrey
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs J Clarke
Assistant Headteacher: Mr A Palin

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 with the attached form. 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.
 - students/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. This fine will increase to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.



Aqueduct Primary School
 Castlefields Way
 Aqueduct, Telford, TF4 3RP

Headteacher: Mrs T Lockley
 Chair of Governors: Mrs L Aubrey
 Deputy Headteacher: Mrs J Clarke
 Assistant Headteacher: Mr A Palin

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01952 386210



A2175@taw.org.uk

Request for Leave in Term Time from School

Date:.....

To: The Head Teacher of Aqueduct Primary School

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

Full name

From (date)..... to(date)..... forschool days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer).....and (parent/carer).....

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

(if necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

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

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

Name of 1st Parent/Carersigned.....

Current address.....

Mobile No.....

Name of 2nd Parent/Carersigned.....

Current address.....

Mobile No.....

**Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not.
 Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time for the Head Teacher.**

For office use only

Date request for leave in term time received by school

Current Attendance.....% last year's attendance%

Number of school sessions previously taken as leave in term time

Siblings Other schools confirmed yes / no

What actions are other schools taking?

LEAVE IN TERM TIME AGREED / NOT AGREED

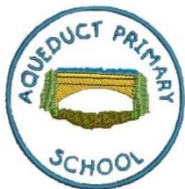
Request for leave is agreed / not agreed for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed Job title

Print Name Dated.....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent

Any notes:



Aqueduct Primary School
Castlefields Way
Aqueduct, Telford,
TF4 3RP

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A2175@taw.org.uk

DATE
NAME
ADDRESS

Headteacher: Mrs T Lockley
Chair of Governors: Mrs L Aubrey
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs J Clarke
Assistant Headteacher: Mr A Palin

Dear
Holiday Request for

Thank you for your letter dated *** requesting permission for CHILD/CHILDRENS NAME to be absent from school for * school days from ***to ***.

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 CHILD/CHILDRENS NAME is as successful as possible and can achieve their 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.

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

Yours sincerely

T. Lockley

Mrs T Lockley
Head Teacher