ATTENDANCE

POLICY

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Contents

Aspire Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent/Introduction

Achieving regular attendance at Aspire is key to improving the life chances of our students. Our students deserve to be on equal footing when they leave Aspire and so require the highest level of access, attendance, and engagement with quality educational opportunities.

At Rotherham Aspire safeguarding our students is always our foremost priority and we ensure our values and principles supporting attendance reflect this. We care passionately about our pupils understanding the importance of attendance in supporting reengagement in learning. Our learners are consistently those who are acutely disengaged from education and historically hold very poor records of attendance. At Rotherham Aspire we understand the importance of committing ourselves to the continual monitoring of attendance. We understand that our students need a high level of support and monitoring in order to build and sustain improvements in these areas. Rotherham Aspire actively pursues every young person where attendance is a barrier to their education and we do this on a daily basis through telephone calls, home visits and multi-agency working. If we experience a period of 5 consecutive days non-attendance then a home visit will be conducted to ensure a young person is safe and well. Additionally, this visit will also be used to identify any attendance concerns that need to be discussed with parent/carer and young person.

'No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action'

Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2016.

Aspire are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school culture and ethos that values good attendance including:

- **Ensure staff understand their role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.**
- **Regular attendance monitoring by the admin team/ tutor/ teacher/ Assistant Heads is in place to identify and act early to poor attendance patterns.**
- **Students with poor attendance and/or punctuality are supported thoroughly through a re-engagement package.**
- **Students with good and rapidly improving attendance and/or punctuality are recognized and rewarded.**
- **Students and their parent/carers are made aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and are informed of the consequences when it is not.**
- **School attendance matters Processes are embedded in our school attendance practices.**

Rotherham Aspire has an established working relationship with Early Help Services. We have regular meetings with a clear focus on attendance processes and signposting is evident in our school attendance process. We utilise the signs of safety assessment where need is identified to plan and support children and families where attendance is becoming problematic. Rotherham Aspire works with colleagues to identify any young person that would benefit from Early Help interventions/support this includes a reluctance to engage in education. Our systems around this

co-working relationship allow us to ensure an additional level of support is appropriately offered to families in order to best support a period of non-attendance. Regular and punctual school attendance is encouraged via our attendance systems and processes as we understand a positive attitude to this plays an important role in ensuring that all children have access to a full curriculum where valuable learning hours are not lost

Why Regular Attendance is Critical

In order for our children to make progress both socially and academically they must be at school! Any absence affects the pattern of a child or young person's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and progress- for many of our student's mainstream school has failed and there may be significant gaps in learning or barriers to it. Time spent with specialist staff to support attendance is crucial and will help increase confidence and maximize learning opportunities. Any child or young person's absence allows for further disengagement from learning and effects life chances.

Rotherham Aspire expects that students will be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Excellent Attendance

To encourage excellent attendance Rotherham Aspire will:

- Communicate with parents daily- via text message or a phone call.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on how their child is performing at Aspire through half termly progress meetings where their attendance and punctuality is discussed and how this relates to their attainment and progress.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and centre achievements.
- Always recognize attendance from the students' own starting point.
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and rewards.
- Listen to students and parents/ carers to make necessary adjustments to support improvement.
- Involve outside agencies to offer further support to our young people

Parents and Carers

We encourage an open dialogue with parents about attendance as this helps to identify areas of concern. We always feel that regular absence problems are best resolved between Aspire, the parents/carer and the child.

If a child is reluctant to attend then we advise parents and carers not to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives an impression that attendance does not matter and may make an ongoing attendance issue worse.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence and in extreme cases of persistent absence will be responded to using the school attendance mater process.

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Parents/carers have a legal duty to send their children to school regularly and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty. Only Rotherham Aspire, within the context of the law, can approve absence. Parents/carers cannot approve absence.

Parents/carers should attempt to arrange appointments for their child or young person outside normal school hours whenever possible. When the appointment is local the student will be expected to attend school before and/or after the appointment.

Parents/carers are expected to contact Aspire at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way the school may invite the parents to an Attendance Review Meeting in order to try and resolve the situation by agreement. However, if other ways of improving the child's attendance have failed the school will then follow the school attendance matters pathway referring to the Local Authority Early Help & Family Engagement Service who can use Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

Students

Each student must ensure that they arrive promptly. Every site is open from 9.15 am. Students are expected to arrive at Aspire by 9.30am and be learning. Students who currently have targeted intervention programmes/ induction phases will have very personalised timetables and they are expected to adhere to those times.

Permission to leave the site will normally only be given for fixed term exclusion or authorised medical/dental appointments.

Students are required to sign out if they leave site for a mentoring session or their provision is offsite at an external provider. Please refer to the school offsite visits policy for further information.

Registers

Registers are legal documents and must be taken clearly and accurately, using the correct symbols/codes. (Appendix 1: attendance codes is attached)

Registers are currently taken for morning and afternoon sessions. They are inputted by administration staff and should be complete by 10.30 am and 1.15 pm.

Procedures – Assistant Heads

The Assistant Heads will meet weekly with their identified key staff to monitor the attendance and punctuality of all students. This happens after weekly line management meetings with their Line Manager where students are discussed and identified. This overview will identify any attendance problems and students who are at risk of persistent absence; in addition, they will check teachers concerns about attainment.

They must discuss attendance issues with all staff to share information.

Where attendance is a cause for concern the Assistant Headteachers will ensure that:

- First day phone calls have been made and recorded on SIMS.
- They have made a phone call home personally and recorded on SIMS conversations after 3 days of consecutive absence.
- Ensure safe and well checks have been completed after 3 days of consecutive absence.
- Ensure that letters have been sent, SAMP is up to date and followed collating information as necessary.
- Considered and discussed Attendance Panel Review.
- Made a signs of safety plan with identified staff and parents/carers/ young person should attendance be below 75%

Analysing and Reporting Attendance Data

The Attendance Officer and Assistant Heads are to review attendance on a daily basis and monitor this continually, producing reports every half term. All teaching staff should look out for any patterns in absence and investigate or report their concerns to the Assistant Head as appropriate. If a student's attendance level drops below 90% the cause will be investigated by the Attendance Officer or Assistant Head who will liaise with parents/ carers. If there is no improvement the Attendance Procedure (appendix 2) will be followed.

Teaching Staff (Teachers and Tutors)

Subject teachers/ tutors must always follow up suspicious absences by informing the Assistant Head of any discrepancies immediately. They should query persistent or frequent absences from their lesson to offer any further support.

If staff delivering lessons have an unexpected free period due to non-attendance (which is not PPA) they must inform their Assistant Head who will direct them to support attendance. Staff will be deployed to do home visits when appropriate.

Subject teachers will attempt to support students who have been absent to re-build relationships/ self-esteem/ confidence. All staff will always welcome student into their lessons/ centres in a positive way to BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS.

Safe & Well

Where 3 days of consecutive absence have occurred, Assistant Heads will allocate a staff member to complete a Safe and Well check. This is to ensure that appropriate Safeguarding measures are conducted to confirm a young person is safe and well. Additionally, this visit will also be used to identify any attendance concerns which need to be addressed with the parent/ carer and young person.

Should the school staff member not be granted permission to enter the home, or parents/ carers are out, a calling card will be issued each time indicating our concerns and requesting a parent/ carer to contact Aspire. Where appropriate other professionals will be contacted and this will be logged on SIMS.

Illness During the School Day

If a student becomes genuinely unwell during the school day the Assistant Head will make the decision as to whether or not the student can go home. Admin staff will contact parents/carers directly.

No student should leave the premises without staff permission (based on whether contact has been made with a parent/carer at home).

Absence Procedure

On the first day of a student's absence parents/carers should contact Aspire to report the absence. This should be done by a telephone call to reception and at the earliest opportunity, giving a reason for the absence and a date when the child or young person is expected to return. Admin staff should log this on SIMS and inform the Assistant Head.

If an acceptable reason for absence is given and accepted by the Assistant Head the absence may be marked authorised. The Assistant Head is under no obligation to accept the reason given for absence if there is doubt of its validity.

Where appropriate, parents/carers regularly identifying poor health as a reason for their child or young person's absence will be asked to provide a medical certificate from their GP. If a student is considered Persistently Absent no absence will be granted without a medical record from the health professional.

If the absence involves physical injury with implications upon the student's return to the Aspire a risk assessment will be carried out by the Assistant Head for each specific case.

Understanding Types of Absence

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 cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, evidenced medical/dental appointments, emergencies or other unavoidable causes, which unavoidably fall in school time. These are allowed by law, such as:

- Illness
- Religious observance

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which legislation does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority, through its school attendance matters process using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children or young people off school.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a mark in the register.
- Shopping.
- Looking after other children.
- Birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.
- Waiting for a delivery.
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport.
- Sleeping in after a late night.
- Parent/carer's Illness.
- Prolonged or repeated patterns for absence due to illness without a medical note from the GP.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls to 90% or below for whatever reason.

Term Dates	PA = 90% Sessions per term	PA=90% Days per term
Half Term 1 – Sept to Oct	7 sessions	3.5 days absence
Half Term 2 – Nov to Dec	14 sessions	7 days absence
Half Term 3 – Jan to Feb	20 sessions	10 days absence
Half Term 4 – Feb to April	25 sessions	12.5 days absence
Half Term 5 – May to June	31 sessions	15.5 days absence
Half Term 6 – June to July	38 sessions	19 days absence

Absence at this level can cause considerable damage to any child or young person's educational prospects and we need parent/ carers 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 parents/ carers will be informed of this immediately.

Supporting and Encouraging Good Attendance

Whilst any child or young person may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best worked through with support from Aspire, parents/carers and the child or young person. If a child or young person is reluctant to attend it is never a good idea 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 makes things worse. Parents/ carers can support students by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Providing a healthy breakfast.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly to the school.
- Retaining open and honest communication with the child or young person's school.
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive).

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Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality at Off-Site Provision

Where students attend external provision, we receive daily registration information for the student. Any offsite provision that is not supported by Aspire staff will be considered to be Alternative provision and safeguarding attendance arrangements will have been made as such to reflect school close of registers. Should a child be absent from AP then this will be followed up using the school attendance practices.

Leave of Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- ο Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- ο Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- ο Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Fixed Term Penalty Notice

Reducing unauthorised absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a student's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Truanting can also leave a student vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime**.**

Under existing legislation, parents/ carers commit an offence if a child or young person fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (absences without a valid reason), even if they are missing school without your knowledge

Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under the Education Act 1996.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court. Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice enables parents/ carers to discharge what is potentially the liability for a criminal conviction.

The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receiving a notice and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days.

As a parent/carer you can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that your child or young person attends school regularly.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Children Missing in Education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and who are not receiving suitable education otherwise that at a school.

Children Missing Education are at significant risk of under achieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) later in life.

Rotherham Aspire follow the local authority guidance set out in the policy for children missing in education set out by the Children and young people's services. We follow the school checklist and have included these processes in our practice when removing children from school roll. We will work with the LA CME officer to ensure that any child leaving the authority is only removed from our school roll once an alternative school placement has been confirmed in a different LA. If we are not certain for a Childs transition through to another school them, we will follow appendix B of the CME process set out by the LA, please see CYPS policy CME policy

Links with other policies

Aspire Alternative Provision Policy

Aspire Safeguarding Policy

Aspire Offsite Visits Policy

Rotherham Local Authority CME policy

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Appendix 1 Coding

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

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Code	Definition	Scenario
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 Attendance flowchart

Meeting – Assistant Heads and Admin to meet Mondays AM to discuss previous week and who needs letters etc.

Trigger Point is reached
75% Attendance or 5 days unauthorised absence

- Admin from each site to send letters
- Reward letters for attendance
- Texts and phone calls

Letter 1 sent Offer to discuss and monitor over a 4 week period

Offer to refer to Early Help

Assistant Head and mentor to complete signs of safety mapping with young person and carer – Early Help Request completed if agreed

Reward & Communicate with parents / carers ← Yes ← Does Attendance improve to target level?

No

Letter 2 Arrange informal meeting in school. Monitor over a 4 week period

Assistant Head & Mentor to meet with Parents/carers

Continue support package/Reward & Communicate with parents / carers ← Yes ← Does Attendance improve to target level?

No

Letter 3 Invite to Attendance Panel Meeting. Monitor over a 4 week period

Formal attendance Panel 1 per half term With Assistant Heads, Deputy Heads and/or Headteacher

Reward & Communicate with parents / carers ← Yes ← Does Attendance improve to target level?

No → Review progress since meeting. Any mitigating circumstances

Letter 4 and refer to LA to request a FPN ← No

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Appendix 3 Aspire School Attendance Matters Process

- It is paramount that the SAMP letters are sent out by the **deadlines** from the flow chart on the SAMP process.
- Ensure that the SAMP letters are recorded on Sims on the actual date of sending NOT date of uploading. (maybe several days after)

- DoHi to be responsible for setting up of tracking spreadsheet and Attendance Letters folder
- Centre Heads responsible for tracking attendance
- Admin responsible for sending letters and uploading information to SIMS
- JaWa to attend all panel meetings to support Centre Heads

Student Attendance and/or deterioration in attendance is identified by school.   MOVE TO

Pre letter - inviting Parents/Carers into school to a meeting to see how we can help/support the family to improve attendance.

Attendance Panel Meeting
At this meeting offer the family an Early Help Assessment - If Early Help are not working with the family. If the family decline Early Help Assessment this MUST be documented and entered onto Sims and CPOMS.
Support mentoring.
Offer the family a 2-week period (10 school days) - from the meeting date to improve attendance
No improvement in attendance -

Who?
• Centre Lead identifies issues with attendance
• Missed 5 school days or less than 70% attendance
• Admin sends pre-letter 1 with invite to meeting.
• If parents/carers live together both must have a letter.
• Admin attaches letter to SIMs and puts in the Attendance process file.
• Meeting with parents/carers, Centre Lead and JaWa.
• Outcome of meeting recorded by Centre Lead.
• If parent agrees to Early Help, Centre Lead to send in the referral.
• If part time is agreed Centre Lead must give timetable to parents/carers and have Parent Contract signed – Admin to upload to SIMS

MOVE TO
Letter 1 - send letter 1 out to parents /carer.
A copy of letter 1 to be sent personalised to both parents/carers if living in the same house.
Monitoring period -Attendance is to be monitored for 15 to 20 school days.

You can send out letter 2 if there is **NO improvement for attendance made within 15 - 20 school days.**

Who?
• Centre Lead monitors attendance
• Admin send Letter 1
• If parents/carers live together both must have a letter.
• Admin attaches letter to SIMs and puts in the Attendance file.
• If part time is agreed Centre Lead must give timetable to parents/carers and have Parent Contract signed – Admin to upload to SIMS

MOVE TO
Letter 2 - No improvements send out letter 2.
 A copy of letter 2 to be sent personalised to both parents if living in the same house.

After 5 days following the sending of letter 2
SEND out **Supportive Parent/ Carer letter** (inviting Parents/Carers into school for a further Parent/Carer meeting) **this shows additional offer of support for evidence at FPN**

You must send out letter 3 if there is **NO improvement for attendance made within 15 - 20 school days.**

Who?
• Centre Lead monitors attendance
• Admin send Letter 2
• If parents/carers live together both must have a letter.
• Admin attaches letter to SIMs and puts in the Attendance process file.
• Centre Lead monitors attendance for 5 days
• Admin to send 'supportive letter' with invite into center for meeting.
• Meeting with parents/carers, Centre Lead and JaWa.
• Outcome of meeting recorded by Centre Lead.
• If part time is agreed Centre Lead must give timetable to parents/carers and have Parent Contract signed – Admin to upload to SIMS

MOVE TO

Letter 3 & Fixed Penalty Notice

Send letter 3.
Once letter 3 has been sent out to the family - personalised to both parents.

(quote from RMBC MUST follow Letter 3) You can immediately send in the request for a Fixed penalty notice to RMBC.

Who?
• Centre Lead monitors attendance
• Admin send Letter 3
• If parents/carers live together both must have a letter.
• Admin attaches letter to SIMs and puts in the Attendance process file.
• Centre Lead to request the Fixed Penalty Notice

We cannot stress enough the importance of all documentation being correct, dates correct and timings correct for the SAMP process.

We need to add into the FPN all changes to timetable, submit evidence of timetable change (actual copies of timetables and supporting Parental Agreement must sit with each timetable)

We must be able to document date and times of home visits; show our evidence what school have done to exhaust our interventions to re-engage pupils back into education with attendance. Descriptive Sims recordings.

Sims contacts Must be descriptive, i.e "Home visit carried out by (staff name) at (time) child seen/not seen"

Attendance team share with us that - very often sit in court and parent/s will say they have not agreed to timetable changes or signed TT changes.

Often Parents /carers will attend court and say they have both NOT received any of the SAMP letters so really important to send double personalised letters to both parents/carers who live in the same household.