



## **Introduction**

This policy is underpinned by South Ayrshire's Promoting Attendance Guidance for Schools (May 2024). In Alloway Primary, our average attendance for the school year 2023-2024 was 94.85%, an increase of 0.48% from the previous year. Statistics and research has consistently demonstrated that children and young people's progress, attainment and achievements can be negatively impacted by any absence. Evidence suggests that attendance that falls below 90% impacts negatively on progress, with the higher the absence, the greater the impact on attainment.

School attendance is a complex area of need, and involvement from other services/professionals can be helpful, appropriate and, at times, necessary. However, the aim of the current guidance is to support early and effective school attendance procedures and practice at a school level. The Scottish Government's (2019a) *Included, Engaged and Involved* (Part 1) document states that attendance should not be considered in isolation and that work within schools, establishments and Local Authorities should be built upon a foundation of positive relationships, and an inclusive ethos and culture which promotes attendance.

This policy will highlight the procedures we must follow in Alloway Primary School in order to record attendance as well as the whole school and individualised approaches to improving attendance.

## **Daily Attendance Procedures**

- It is vital that teachers accurately record who is absent each morning before 9.10am - on the class weekly register sheet and on the daily sheet that is given to the office staff.
- Children are marked late by office if they arrive at school after 9.10am, going through the office to register.
- Office staff will email Emma Park the name and time of arrival of any late children and she will pastoral note this.
- Office staff will use codes (see below) on SEEMIS to mark reason for absence.
- This is a streamlined list of codes that we will use consistently as a school going forward. The authority are currently looking at the use of these codes to ensure consistency across South Ayrshire. The accurate and consistent use of these are important to allow us to analyse attendance and therefore increase attendance where need be. To Be Confirmed code can be used initially however there is a one-week window where this must be clarified

and accurate code used. TBC should not be the final code for any young person.

- At 9.30am, office staff will send a text for all absent children where the reason is unknown.
- If no contact is made with school, the office staff will call all contacts at 9.45am and every 15mins until 10.30am.
- If attempts to contact have been unsuccessful, a decision will then be made by SLT, with home visits being made where necessary.

\*Office staff have individualised protocols for certain children where SLT intervention is required at an earlier point and where there are risk factors.

Parents should call, email or write a letter to inform school of any upcoming absence or to ask for an authorised holiday (see parent overview of attendance). Learning Journals is NOT an acceptable form of communicating absence.

#### **Absence Codes:**

-	Present
L	Late
H	School Holiday
UPH	Unauthorised Absence
PH	Authorised Holiday. <i>On rare occasions a holiday during term time is authorised. Examples of this being when a family needs time together to recover from distress, a family holiday is restricted to term-time because of the parent's job (e.g. armed forces, emergency services), visiting family in their country of origin. The Head Teacher may also authorise under circumstances considered to be exceptional.</i>
OAT	Visiting other educational establishments for transition, nurture etc. E.G. Chesnut Cottage, Wellington School.
FLD	Field Day - Extracurricular events organised through the school e.g. Music Festival, Football tournament,
VIS	Trips
PER	Medical Appointments
DCA	Family Bereavement/ Exceptional Family Circumstances
SEL	Illness

\*See updated management guidelines and speak with PT if doesn't fit with any of these.

#### **Ongoing Attendance Procedures**

Principal Teacher leading attendance will monitor attendance percentages fortnightly for all pupils. Pupils identified as requiring closer monitoring and support will be tracked weekly.

A number of tools will be used to identify reasons for low attendance and in order to support and improve attendance. These are all included in South Ayrshire Council Guidance and summarised in the Attendance Toolkit document. These aim to give us a better understanding of why attendance is low by gathering views and information from children and families.

Examples -

- Phone call with parent (Suggested Questions)
- Informal chat with parents in person as well as learners
- Team around Family meetings
- Completion of Factors Grid
- Risk and Resilience Questionnaire
- 5 Point Scale
- Drawing Ideal School Technique

Formal letters are being revised with the authority steering group as we aim to take a more holistic approach, focussed on building supportive relationships with children and families.

Patterns of attendance will also be identified. PT Attendance will explore these patterns by analysing individualised attendance reports and through liaison with class teachers, staff meetings and SLT meetings.

### **Individualised Approaches**

By gathering information and views, we are able to establish next steps for children with attendance concerns. This will allow us to create plans for children through STINT paperwork, outlining targets and approaches.

These may include:

- Creation of a safe space
- Access to hub and sensory room
- Regular check-ins - this may be a general daily check-in or during a specific subject, time of the day.
- Tailored HWB and nurture lessons/interventions
- Appropriate learning experiences and/or support/challenge in areas of curriculum
- Support with friendships

- Check-in with parents
- Support for parents - outside agencies

### **Whole School Approaches**

Positive relationships with children, where they feel heard, is essential in maximising attendance. As a Gold Rights Respecting School, we must ensure we give learners the time and opportunity to express themselves. This will allow us to identify risk factors as early as possible. Allowing young people to have a voice in how and what they learn will lead to improved engagement. Children who enjoy school and who have a positive relationship with staff and peers, are more likely to attend more often. Consistency and routines are vital for vulnerable children.

Attendance will feature in all agendas for staff meetings, support staff meetings, department meetings and SLT meetings, giving staff the opportunity to raise any concerns and for SLT to share any updates.

Staff will report any concerns or patterns to PT as soon as possible so that any these can be explored at the earliest possible opportunity. This may be verbally or via pastoral notes.

The benefits of positive attendance will feature regularly in communication with parents e.g. newsletters, school X account, school website, Parent Council Meetings, curricular evenings, posters in the school.

At the beginning of each school year, parents will be given an easy-to-read overview of Alloway's attendance policy, including our stance on holidays during school time. This is one of the main causes of absence in our school. Each month thereafter, parents will receive a statistic on attendance, aiming to improve their understanding of the impact of missing school. South Ayrshire Council's media campaign will be shared and retweeted on X. Staff will also share information on attendance via Learning Journals as directed by PT.

Updated August 2024 by E Park (reviewed by F. Meney)