



## Attendance Policy 2023

Adopted by the Trust Board of  
Aspire Learning Trust  
November 2023

**Policy reference:**

**This policy is to be reviewed:**

Annually

**The next review date is:**

November 2024

**Review is the responsibility of:**

Local Governing Body (New Road  
Primary School and Nursery and Park  
Lane Primary School and Nursery)

### Review History

**Review ratified:**

November 2023

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#### Aims and Objectives:

- for all pupils to achieve at least 97% attendance unless there are identified reason
- to emphasise the importance of good attendance in achieving a child's full potential
- to ensure all parents are aware of their legal responsibility for the regular and punctual attendance of their child
- to ensure all pupils are aware of the expectation to attend school every day
- to ensure there is a consistent approach towards attendance-related matters across both schools
- to ensure that home and school work together to achieve high attendance

#### Systems used:

##### Registration

The classroom doors open at 8.45 am and the doors are locked just after 8.50 am. Children begin their morning tasks immediately. All registers are completed and closed by 9am.

##### Lateness

All pupils should report to the main office once the classroom doors are locked so they can be signed in. Members of staff have been asked NOT to open the classroom doors after 8.50, as learning will have begun.

Pupils arriving up to 30 minutes after registration closes will be marked as L (late). This is not counted as an absence.

Pupils arriving more than 30 minutes late will be recorded as U (unauthorised absence) and this will be counted as an absence.

##### Absences

All absences from school are either authorised or unauthorised, using criteria agreed by Cambridgeshire County Council.

**Authorised absences** are when a pupil is absent for a satisfactory reason. Examples of authorised absences are genuine illness, unavoidable medical appointments, religious observance and exceptional circumstances (like bereavement or the marriage of an immediate family member).

**Unauthorised absences** are absences when no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents/carers. Examples of unauthorised absences are getting up late, going shopping, going for a haircut or going on holiday.

Parents/carers are requested to inform the school office of an absence by 9.30 on the morning of the absence. This can be by telephone, email, text, letter or in person to the school office. This will need to be done for every day of absence.

**Term time holidays** are strongly discouraged. The school follows the latest DfE guidelines and Cambridgeshire County Council guidance which state that long term leave “**can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances**”. Decisions are made by the Head following the completion of a school application form. Parents are notified of the decision as well as reminding parents they may be fined should the unauthorised holiday go ahead.

### **Current legislation regarding unauthorised term-time leave (including holidays)**

From September 2017, any parent who takes their child out of school for term-time leave of more than 6 consecutive sessions over a 4 week period which has NOT been authorised by the school, may receive a Penalty Notice. All parents have been sent two updated information sheets about the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued during the current academic year. Should a child be off school for an unauthorised holiday longer than 3 consecutive days, office staff complete the relevant paperwork once the child returns to school. These are then emailed to the Cambridgeshire Attendance Team.

### **Long term medical absences**

We hope that all children will be well enough to attend school every day, but realise that some children will have injuries and illnesses which may result in long term absences from school or frequent absences for medical reasons. Genuine medical absences are NOT counted as unauthorised, so school staff work together with parents and medical staff to provide maximum support.

### **School Attendance Letters**

Both schools follow a **three letter system**.

Letter one informs the parents that their child's attendance is a concern and medical evidence is required for further absences (when illness related).

Letter two informs the parents that their child's attendance hasn't improved and shares information regarding the Education Act and the potential of a financial penalty.

Letter three invites parents/carers to attend a formal parenting contract.

Failure to attend this formal meeting can result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

### **Penalty Notices**

A Penalty Notice is the fine for non-attendance issued by Cambridgeshire County Council's attendance team.

Schools are required to inform when a child's attendance fails to improve or when they are absent for unauthorised holidays or suspected holidays. The Attendance Team is fully independent of schools and makes the decision to issue a Penalty Notice.

Issuing a Penalty Notice results in:

- A fine of £60 per parent, per child if payment is made to the Local Authority within 21 days.
- The fine increases to £120 per parent, per child if payment is received after 21 days but before 28 days.

- Parents who fail to pay the fine within the specified time are liable for prosecution in a Magistrate's Court where, on conviction, a sentence of a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison may be imposed.

Penalty Notices can only be served in accordance with Cambridgeshire County Council's Code of Conduct, a copy of which is kept in each school.