



# **ACORN FREE SCHOOL**

## **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

**Date of Issue: March 2017**

**Date of Review:**

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### **Purpose**

At Acorn Free School we aim to ensure that all students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential.

The Acorn Free School will endeavour to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby all students thrive.

All Acorn Free School staff will work with students and families to ensure each student attends Acorn Free School regularly and punctually.

To meet these objectives Acorn Free School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and partner schools to provide mutual information, advice and support.

### **Statutory Duties**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive full time education by regular attendance at a school or by other arrangements. The majority of students will be dual registered at Acorn Free School and a pattern of attendance will be agreed at induction.

Acorn Free School is responsible for recording student attendance twice a day, one at the start of the morning sessions and once during the afternoon session.

### **Aims**

1. To improve the overall percentage of students attendance
2. To reduce the level of persistent absence (PA)
3. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
4. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
5. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students
6. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data and to share this with partner schools.
7. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home, school and partner schools.

### **Roles and responsibilities regarding attendance**

## **Students**

Acorn Free School expects all students to be punctual and maintain high levels of attendance

## **Parents**

Parents/carers are expected to know which absences are acceptable, (see Appendix 1). Any absence will only be authorised at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Parents should be aware of the legal consequences of non-attendance.

Parents/carers should be aware that poor punctuality may result in an unauthorised absence being recorded. This information will be shared with the referring school.

Parents/carers are asked to inform Acorn Free School of any barriers to their child attending the school.

Acorn Free School asks that all parents/carers inform the School's Administration Officer on their child's first day of absence.

## **All Staff**

Acorn Free School expects all teachers to encourage punctuality through the positive meeting and greeting of groups.

All lateness must be recorded on SIMS and a note made of reasons given. This is carried out by the Admin offices

All staff should support students who are returning to Acorn Free School following an absence by ensuring that they are given the time and resources to reintegrate positively.

Teachers are expected to monitor their class attendance and identify patterns and report any concerns to their Head Teacher.

The link between attendance and attainment should be actively promoted.

## **Administration Officer**

It is the responsibility of the School's Administration Officer to maintain the day to day running of attendance procedures, including taking the register during assembly time.

When no explanation for an absence has been received, the Administration Officer is responsible for making contact with parents/carers to confirm the nature of the absence. A log of all telephone calls is maintained and the information transferred to SIMS.

The Administration Officer should analyse attendance data to identify any patterns of concern and pass information to the Education Welfare Officer each week.

## **Head Teacher**

It is the responsibility of the Inclusion Manager and Head Teacher to oversee the school's attendance policy and practice.

In collaboration with the Administration Officer, the Head Teacher will monitor, evaluate and review the policy and its impact annually.

### **Governors**

Governors should monitor and evaluate attendance and ensure the policy is carried out.

### **Attendance Improvement Service**

The Acorn Free School has contracted an Education Welfare Offer to intervene and improve attendance as and when the Head Teacher deems this necessary. This will be overseen by the Inclusion Manager/Senior Teacher.

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

It is the Head Teacher's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A telephone call on the first day of absence followed by a letter on return from parents/carers does not in itself authorise an absence; only Acorn Free School's acceptance of the explanation authorises the absence. The following examples should make this clearer:

#### **Authorised Absences**

Sickness

Unavoidable medical/dental appointment (half day maximum)

Days of religious observance such as main religious days of Eid (agreed with Head Teacher beforehand)

Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Going to other schools for visits, interviews or examination

#### **Unauthorised Absences**

Looking after brothers, sisters and others

Shopping

Celebrating a birthday

Sleeping in

One child is ill, so all are kept off

Holidays in term time will not automatically be sanctioned and each case will be judged on merit and a decision made in liaison with the referring school.