Annie Lennard Primary School

Attendance Policy

Monitoring and Review
This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes.

Policy Owner: Natalie Crozier
Attendance Lead: Ellen Hadden
Approved By: Governing Body
Date Approved: December 2026
Review Date: September 2028

1. Policy Statement

At Annie Lennard Primary School, we believe that regular school attendance is essential for pupils to achieve their full educational potential, develop positive relationships, and participate fully in school life. We are committed to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality and working in partnership with parents/carers, pupils, and external agencies to remove barriers to attendance.

What is good attendance and why is it important to us?

At Annie Lennard Primary School, we expect all our pupils to attend school every day that they possibly can. Ensuring a pupil's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of all parents/carers. We believe good and regular attendance is when a pupil reaches at least 96% attendance. This means missing no more than 8 school days during an academic year.

Research findings show there is a strong correlation between good attendance and high achievement. We believe that good attendance levels maximise opportunities for each pupil to realise their full potential.

If a pupil has 90% attendance through their primary and secondary education; it means that they have missed the equivalent of a whole year off school.

100%	Excellent attendance	Full attendance and no days missed from school – the best chance of success
96%	Good attendance	8 days missed from school
95%	Below the expected level of attendance	9 days missed – less chance of success and makes it harder for your child to make progress
91%	Below the expected level of attendance and needs to improve	18 days missed
90%	Worrying and attendance needs to improve	19 days missed (persistent absence threshold). Your child will find it very hard to make progress.
85%	Poor attendance and must improve	28 days missed
80%	Poor attendance and must improve	38 days missed

We strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued and secure.
We believe in working in partnership with parents and carers, pupils and governors and strive for high expectations of all our pupils, and that includes good attendance at school.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote high levels of attendance for all pupils.
- Ensure pupils attend school regularly and punctually.
- Identify attendance concerns at an early stage.
- Provide support to pupils and families experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Meet statutory responsibilities regarding attendance monitoring and reporting.
- Foster a culture where attendance is valued and celebrated.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- The Education Act 1996.
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Department for Education).

- Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Relevant safeguarding and child protection legislation.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Promote positive attendance across the school.
- Ensure attendance procedures are implemented consistently.
- Monitor attendance data and trends.
- Report attendance information to governors.

Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead will:

- Monitor daily attendance records.
- Identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.
- Communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance concerns.
- Coordinate support plans and interventions.

Class Teachers

Teachers will:

- Record attendance accurately and promptly.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Report attendance concerns to the Attendance Lead.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day unless they are genuinely unwell.
- Inform the school of any absence on the first day.
- Provide evidence where appropriate.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive on time and ready to learn.
- Engage positively with attendance support where required.

5. Registration

- The school day starts at 8.45.
- Registers will be completed in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Pupils arriving after registration closes will be marked as late in accordance with national attendance codes.

6. Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must:

1. Contact the school before 8.45 on the first day of absence.
2. Provide the reason for absence.
3. Keep the school informed regarding ongoing absences.

If no contact is received, the school will follow safeguarding procedures, including contacting emergency contacts where necessary.

7. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence

Examples include:

- Genuine illness.
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours.
- Religious observance.
- Exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised Absence
Examples include:
- Family holidays during term time without approval.
- Shopping trips.
- Oversleeping.
- Non-specific illness explanations without appropriate evidence when requested.

8. Term-Time Leave
The school discourages leave during term time.
Requests for exceptional leave must:
- Be submitted in writing using the school's leave request form.
- Be made in advance wherever possible.

The Headteacher will consider each request individually and decide whether it meets the criteria for exceptional circumstances.

9. Attendance Monitoring
Attendance will be monitored regularly.

Attendance Level	Response
96% and above	Positive monitoring and recognition
90% to 95.9%	Attendance review and parental contact
Below 90%	Targeted support and intervention
Severe absence (below 50%)	Intensive support and multi-agency involvement

10. Support for Improving Attendance
The school recognises that attendance difficulties may arise for many reasons and will seek to provide support through:
- Meetings with parents/carers.
- Individual attendance plans.
- Pastoral support.
- Safeguarding support.
- Referral to external agencies where appropriate.
- Mental health and wellbeing support.

11. Rewards and Recognition
The school may recognise and celebrate:
- Excellent attendance.
- Improved attendance.
- Good punctuality.
- Individual and class attendance achievements.
- Attendance champion role

Recognition may include certificates, awards, assemblies, or other appropriate rewards.

12. Safeguarding
Poor attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns.
Where attendance issues raise safeguarding concerns, appropriate action will be taken in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

13. Data Protection

Attendance information will be stored and managed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- School data protection policies.

Appendix – School Procedures

Registration procedures

At Annie Lennard we take a register twice a day – once at the start of the morning at 8.55am and once at the start of the afternoon session.

The register is opened at 8.55am and closed at 9.20am. In exceptional circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, we may keep the register open for a longer period.

The start time of the afternoon session differs by year group due to lunch time arrangements. (12.30 and 13.00)

It is the responsibility of the register marker, (class teacher or their cover), to record the pupil as present (/) or absent (N).

We keep our register electronically using the MIS system 'SIMS'.

The data is captured by calling out names from the class register. The information is then entered onto the system as the class teacher, or their cover calls out names.

At 9.20am the registers will be officially closed. In accordance with regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark (U) that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. Persistent late arrival is not acceptable and could mean parents/carers face the possibility of a legal sanction if the problem persists.

Register check and follow up

The registers are returned electronically to the school office where absences are reviewed, and late arriving pupils are added to the register. The office staff will enter a pupil onto the system, using the appropriate code in relation to the reason for absence.

Where pupils arrive late to school, the appropriate code is entered on to the register identifying where a pupil has arrived after the register has closed.

Contact is then made with parents and carers regarding any unexplained absences.

Types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required daily.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, or other unavoidable causes which have been agreed by the Head Teacher. We ask that routine dental, optical and medical appointments are made after school, at weekends or in school holidays, to avoid missed learning. Where a religious festival is being celebrated and falls within the school term, one day of leave will be authorised by the Head Teacher. If religious festivals fall during school holidays or weekends, pupils are expected to attend school on school days both before and after the celebration, absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no agreement has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which are not agreed by the Head Teacher
- Absences which have never been properly explained or when school do not receive a message for the absence.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after the close of register).
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Leave of absence that has not been agreed by the school (including term time holidays).
- Absences for which medical evidence has not been provided but has been requested by the school.

This list is not exhaustive, and the authorisation of absence is judged on circumstances at the time. We will always try to contact parents to inform you if your child's absence has not been authorised or if additional information is required regarding the absences.

First day calling and home visits

If your child is absent, parents should:

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and every day after this that your child is absent from school. This may be done via a telephone call to our number 0121 4294284. A message can be left on the school's answerphone if a parent needs to make an early morning call before the start of the day. Or come into school and report to reception giving information regarding your child's absence personally

If your child is absent, we will:

Record your child's absence on their class register.

Telephone you if we have not heard from you. This should not be necessary as it is the parent's responsibility to inform school regarding a pupil absence. It is important to keep the school updated of any changes to contact details and provide the school with at **least 2 telephone numbers** on which they can be contacted in case of emergency. (NB: if a parent does not supply this information and the school has concerns, they may contact Children's Social Care or the Police).

Enquire about the reason for absence and provide advice and suggestions.

Make contact to discuss your child's attendance if we are concerned about a child's absence.

Please note we monitor whole school attendance below 95% on a weekly basis, with a particular focus on pupils with less than 90% attendance.

If we have not been notified of a reason for absence and have been unable to contact a parent, we will telephone alternative contacts listed for the child and ask if they are able to help and support in contacting parents.

Home visits may be carried out at any point during a pupil's absence as an additional method of contacting families.

For safeguarding purposes, where required, contact may be made with other educational providers where siblings are attending, to assist in contacting families.

If a child is absent for 3 consecutive days and all attempts of making contact have failed, the school may contact the Police to discuss the matter, and request that a 'safe and well' visit be carried out.

Parents must be aware that if the school is not informed of where a child is in school time, the child may be referred to relevant agencies for safeguarding purposes. If a child is absent for 20 school days or more and cannot be located

after diligent enquiries have been made, they will be removed from the school's roll and recorded as a 'missing child.' The child could then lose their school place at Annie Lennard Primary School.

Promotion and Celebration of Excellent Attendance

Our aim is for every pupil to achieve good attendance or better than this, because we know that good attendance is the key to your child reaching their full academic potential.

The school has targets to improve attendance, and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The target level of attendance for our school is 97% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress and how your child's attendance compares with this.

We monitor whole school attendance and punctuality on a regular basis, to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives the school undertakes is provided in our newsletters and displays around school.

We celebrate good attendance and punctuality at our weekly Praise Assemblies and also publish it on our weekly newsletter.

We celebrate good and improving attendance at every opportunity recognising the relationship this has with pupils' academic success.

Incentives for attendance for will include:

- Weekly Trophy for the class with the best attendance – Attendance Harry
- Half termly reward – small treats will be awarded to the 'most improved' class for the half term.
- Reward for children who have 100% attendance for the whole academic year.
- Certificates
- Awarded role of an attendance champion

Data and Monitoring

How we track and report the attendance of children and measure impact.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and closely track any student with attendance of 95% or below on a weekly basis. Any pupil that is on track to becoming a persistent absentee (90%) or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and parents will be informed of this.

All pupils with 95% attendance or below are monitored weekly; the school's family support worker will make contact with parents where required and will support these pupils and their families to improve attendance. Pupils who have attendance of less than 95% are reviewed in a weekly meeting, which is attended by the Attendance team. At this meeting, actions are agreed for each pupil.

We follow a fast-track approach to managing pupil absence through quick and early intervention.

We aim to work with families to tackle problems as soon as they become apparent. This may include telephone calls, letters home, invitations to attend school meetings, announced and unannounced home visits, group work and individual pupil mentoring. Impact of interventions is reviewed in meetings between the Education Welfare Officer and the Senior Leadership Team.

Patterns of attendance are analysed each half term and are benchmarked with the learning community and national trends. Intervention and support are identified from this set of data.

Attendance data is shared with parents and carers at every opportunity including Parents' Evenings, reports, text messages, letters and academic meetings.

Attendance data is shared with staff and pupils on a weekly basis where all staff celebrate and promote attendance with their classes.

We celebrate efforts relating to individual and class attendance/punctuality at the end of each half term.

Regular meetings are held between the Family Support Worker and Senior Leadership Team member who has strategic management for the oversight of attendance.
Attendance data is reported to governors termly.

Thresholds and Referrals

A pupil is classed as on track to being 'severely absent' (SA) when they have missed 50% or more of their time in school at any given time.

A pupil is on track to becoming a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling (i.e., has attendance below 90%) at any given time during the school year for whatever reason.

Absence at these levels is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Whilst it is rare for our pupils to have attendance levels below 50%, both SA and PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance and pastoral system, and we also combine this with academic mentoring where necessary.

Parents are encouraged to contact school at an early stage to resolve any problems relating to attendance and punctuality. This usually has a successful conclusion.

Support from external agencies and the local authority will be sought where additional resources and expertise is required.

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution may be necessary. If there are ongoing concerns regarding a pupil's attendance, the school may refer a child's irregular attendance to the Schools Attendance Support Service within the Local Authority. A variety of legal interventions are possible ranging from parenting contracts, Education Supervision Orders, penalty notice fines and legal action being instituted against parents in Magistrates Court.

Leave of Absence and Holidays in Term Time

All requests for leave of absence should be requested by completing the school's leave of absence form, which is available from the school office. Any requests for leave should be made in writing to the Head Teacher 4 weeks before the leave is required. If however, the leave request is due to an emergency, immediate contact should still be made with the Head Teacher or Family Support Worker to discuss the leave request.

Please be aware, leave can only be authorised on the content of the request. A request for leave of absence form must be completed fully and must include details of all people who have care of the child. Incomplete requests will be declined and will not be considered, which will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. Parents will normally be informed of the decision in writing. All letters will be kept on file. If the child takes time off when leave has not been granted, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. All leave of absence needs to be requested and agreed before any firm bookings are made, this will allow time for the request to be considered and discussion to be held as required. Meetings with families are routinely held to discuss leave of absence requests to ensure the safeguarding of our children. Supporting information should also be provided with the request, to explain the circumstances and the need for leave to be taken in term time. Requests for leave of absence in term time for holidays, visiting relatives and weddings are not normally agreed by the Head Teacher. Where the school receives requests for extended leave of absence and where information has raised concerns that a child is at immediate risk of

forced marriage or Female Genital Mutilation, a referral will made to Sandwell Children's Social Care Trust and the Police.

Term time holidays

If a parent chooses to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time, a leave of absence form must still be completed. As part of our attendance process, we do meet with families to discuss leave of absence requests. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's academic progress as much as any other absence, and we expect parents to help us by not taking pupils away in school time.

We do not permit holidays in term time and will not authorise requests for leave of absence for this reason. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time, are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Holidays should be taken in school holiday time of which we have plenty of weeks available. Unauthorised holidays taken in term time are referred to Sandwell's Attendance and Prosecution Service. Parents taking unauthorised leave in term time may be subject to a penalty notice fine being issued by the Local Authority.

A Penalty Notice may be issued **to each parent/carer, for each child** at:

First offence: £80 if paid within 21 days, which will then increase to £160 if paid within 28 days.

Second offence (within 3 years of the First Offence): Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. Please note that if the fine is not paid within 28 days or the Local Authority proceed straight to court action you are likely to be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. The maximum fine the court can impose for a first offence is £1,000 per parent, per child.

Subsequent offence (within 3 years of the first offence): The Local Authority will proceed straight to court action you are likely to be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. The maximum fine the court can impose for a first offence is £1,000 per parent, per child.

From 19th August 2024, the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices will apply

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school week period can span over different terms and school years.

Penalty Notice Fines will continue to be issued per parent per child.

For example: 2 parents with 3 children would receive a total of 6 Penalty Notices

1

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term Time Holiday or Irregular School Attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days may result in a prosecution)

2

Second Offence
(within 3 years of the First Offence)

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days may result in a prosecution)

3

Third Offence and any further Offences
(within 3 years of the First Offence)

The third time that an offence is committed for either a term time holiday and/or Irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case may be proceeded straight to prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure.

If found guilty of the offence of 'failure to secure their child's regular attendance at a school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1,000 and you will have a criminal record

PLEASE NOTE: If you take any Leave of Absence PRIOR to 19th August 2024 (e.g. in July 2024) then the Penalty Notice will be at the old rate of £60/£120. Any Leave of Absence taken in September 2024 will be charged at the new rates as above

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Escalation of procedures

How we ensure children are safe and how we will tackle absence together.

Roles, responsibilities, intervention and tailored support.

All teaching and support staff are trained and refreshed frequently throughout the school year in their roles in promoting attendance.

First day absence calls are made by the Family Support Worker, office staff or senior leaders.

Follow up absence telephone calls are made by the Family Support Worker.

School meetings and home visits to discuss attendance concerns are attended by the Family Support Worker, Designated Safeguarding Lead, teaching staff and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Preventative and responsive attendance and academic mentoring is carried out by the pastoral team.

Referrals to external agencies for support and consideration of legal intervention are made by the Family Support Worker

Regular attendance analysis and reporting is shared with the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body, including the governor responsible for attendance.

Staff responsible for attendance matters in our school are:

Mrs N Crozier – Head Teacher
Mrs H Higham-Jones – Deputy Head
Mrs E Hadden – Family Support Worker
Mrs D Goldby-Timmis – Administrator
Doreen Johnson - LA Attendance school support officer

Tailored support

Excellent attendance underpins every aspect of our curriculum and maximises opportunities for every pupil to reach their true potential. We will listen, understand, and empathise, providing tailored support and challenge, working together to create excellent attendance patterns.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the child. If your child 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 make things worse. Help and support is always available at school should parents require this.

Individual intervention plans are created in collaboration with families. These are reviewed and monitored regularly with impact shared and further intervention agreed, examples of this include multi-agency meetings, tailored start of the day activities, mentoring and pastoral work.

Formalising support

Referrals are made to the Attendance Support Service where there are ongoing concerns regarding unauthorised absence from school, this also includes unauthorised leave of absence. Penalty notices are issued by the Attendance and Prosecution Service upon referral by Head Teachers, in accordance with the Sandwell Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in Sandwell Council instituting legal action against parents/carers in accordance with section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. A variety of legal options are available for the consideration

of Magistrates which may include Parenting Orders, Education Supervision Orders, and prosecution of parents resulting in fines.

Annie Lennard Primary is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils. Only by attending school regularly and punctually, will pupils be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular school attendance is a major factor in ensuring that children are safe, achieve well and develop socially, emotionally and behaviourally. Partnership will allow us all to promote good or better school attendance, which will prepare children well for their future, preparing them for high school, further education, employment and training, and plays a crucial role in enabling them to become happy, healthy and successful adults.

Appendix 2

Term-time absence for service children

Since September 2013, by law, head teachers are only able to grant requests for leave during term time in "exceptional" circumstances.
Firstly, and most importantly, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) recognises that the educational needs of the service children affected will always be a critical factor when determining whether term-time absence should be granted.

The purpose of this advice note is to give additional guidance from the MOD to head teachers on when the operational needs of the Armed Forces may legitimately prevent service families from taking leave during school holidays; and also to explain how head teachers can seek further advice from the MOD when dealing with specific cases.

As well as operational tours overseas or afloat, there are many situations where the unusual and often unpredictable demands of life in the Armed Forces may prevent service families taking holidays together outside term-time. These demands may see service personnel deployed for lengthy periods of time for training as well as on operational activities, and may also see individuals remaining in their base location, but with full-time duties preventing them taking leave during normal holiday periods.

As with all children, the decision on whether to authorise term-time holidays for the children of service personnel sits solely with the head teacher of their school. Separate advice is being provided to service families explaining how they should present evidence when requesting absence during term-time, and reminding them firmly that the educational needs of their children will remain of great importance.
Advice is also being provided to Unit Commanding Officers and their welfare staff to ensure support is only given to those legitimate applications made by their personnel.

To assist head teachers in making their decisions on absence applications, Unit Commanding Officers and their Welfare staff will be able to provide advice, verification and endorsement as required. If head teachers are unsure how to make contact with the relevant Armed Forces unit they should email Armed Forces Families & Safeguarding (AFFS) People-AFFS-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk.