



SANDFIELD PARK

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date Published: Feb 2023 Date of Review: June 2024 To be reviewed annually

Aims

Sandfield Park is committed to providing an education for all its pupils in Sandfield, Alder Centre for Education (ACE) and Alder Hey Hospital Education. We realise that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly will our young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Alder Centre for Education follows the same term dates as Sandfield. Therefore, ACE pupils are expected to attend on this basis.

The school recognises the clear link between attainment and attendance, and attendance and safeguarding which is part of the Keeping Children Safe in Education policy. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a pupil is clearly unwell, staff at Sandfield/ACE will question parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. The school must receive a valid reason for absence for this to be authorised.

The school will use various rewards to promote excellent attendance (See Rewards Policy)

The whole school community including parents, carers, pupils and all school staff have a responsibility for encouraging excellent attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils feel safe, are able to learn and feel valued members of the school community. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality. The School has two Designated Attendance Leads (DAL), Wendy Henshaw for ACE and Alder Hey Hospital Education, and Eric Kewley for Sandfield. There will be termly attendance staff meetings for all sites as appropriate, highlighting patterns, celebrating improvements and sharing concerns.

Registration

The school is legally required to complete a register twice each day at the very beginning of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. It is a legal requirement that the register is correct. Each site has its own system of registration with prescribed codes used as outlined in staff handbooks in all settings for each pupil.

Please note that if pupils from Sandfield are taught in Alder Hey Hospital, this means they are being educated off-site and will be coded B for sessions attended.

Absences can be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where leave has been granted by the school in advance for example a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion e.g. family wedding;
- where the school is satisfied that the pupil is too ill to attend;



- where a pupil has a medical appointment, however a parent must try to return the pupil to school immediately afterwards or send him or her to school beforehand. This can then be changed to a late mark depending on the time the pupil arrives in school. If a parent/carer has let school know of a medical appointment in advance, staff or office team need to complete a planned absence mark via Arbor;
- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's controlled e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- absence occurs on a date exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupils parents belong;
- in other exceptional circumstances, and for a limited period e.g. a family bereavement.
- ACE pupils have authorised absences when they are not expected in for sessions due to part-time provision.
- An 'N' code cannot be used for longer than five days, and must then become an authorised or unauthorised absence, as appropriate.
- **Unauthorised absences still require a reason for the absence. DAL to make the decision regarding any unauthorised absences and to follow up with parents.**

Except in the circumstances described above absences will be unauthorised

Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent or carer;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for another reasons e.g. a birthday;
- holidays during term time.

Systems and strategies for managing and improving pupil attendance

The collection and analysis of data, with relevant information will be shared with school staff by the DALs.

On a daily basis the office team will go through the registers from 9am and 1.45(Sandfield), 9:30am and 1pm (ACE) and any 'N' absences will be noted. The office will contact teachers where there are missing marks in order for register to be completed. If no explanation has been received, school will attempt to contact the parent or carer. On rare occasions pupils may come into school after this time and can receive an attendance mark if there is a good valid reason for lateness and they are in school for a significant part of that session. The office can record the reason for lateness and time the child arrives on Arbor however it is still the responsibility of the class teacher to check this when a child arrives late to lesson and to record the Late if needed.

If a pupil returns to school with no explanation of their absence from the parent/carer, the office team will attempt to contact the parent or carer. If required a text will be sent to them requesting this information. If there is still no explanation is given, the office team will inform the DAL.

If a pattern of concern is developing, one of the DALs will speak to the parent/carer about their child's pattern of attendance. If there is no significant improvement the parent/carers will be invited into school to discuss attendance.



Parents and carers will be expected to:

- notify the school by telephone/**Pupil Absence email** account or Sandfield class dojo on the first day of absence
- attend parent/carer meetings and consultations, taking an interest in the Child's work activities, and contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspect of the child's school life
- try and make sure the pupil gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning to arrive at school on time

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensure positive outcomes for all children, including the best way to safeguard children. Good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling lifestyle

This policy is to be reviewed annually.

First Day Response – also see appendix 1 for office procedures

Sandfield teachers must complete registers by 9am and 1.30pm, ACE teachers by 9.30 or 1pm

Once the register has been completed, the office team will send a text to parents requesting them to make contact with reason for absence.

A second **text or phone call** will be made, if there is still no communication/response from the parent/carer.

Sandfield

Specific Procedures also include the following:

- If a pupil is absent for a second consecutive day with no reason for absence the office team will phone home.
- If a pupil is present on the day following an absence with no reason provided the office team will phone home to confirm reason for absence on previous day/s.
- If the class team receive a message about an absence, they will need to amend the register accordingly.
- If there is no reason given for absence after this, the DAL will be informed.

Alder Centre for Education (ACE)

Please note an Attendance Service Level Agreement runs alongside this policy.

The needs of the pupils at ACE, and the fact that they remain single registered with their mainstream school, means that attendance is a key priority, and thus our procedures must be very clear.

When a pupil is referred to ACE for education support they become guest pupils on Sandfield's MIS (Arbor). Present marks are recorded by ACE on Arbor, whilst B code is



recorded by their Home School. Both ACE and Home school also record absence codes as appropriate. The nature of the provision at ACE means that procedures for recording attendance **MUST** be precise and accurate.

Both the referring school and parents/carers will receive a copy of the child's timetable. The timetable is personalised to deliver an education that is appropriate to their health needs. Therefore parents/carers accept responsibility for the safety and well-being of the pupil during times when they are not expected to attend a lesson.

This forms an agreement between all parties as outlined in the procedures.

Specific Procedures also include the following:

- Parent/carer must contact the school office to inform of absence before the first lesson is due to start. A call by the pupil or a call to the taxi driver is not sufficient.
- The school office to contact parent on first day of absence if no call has been received. First response procedures to be followed.
- If no contact received from parent/carer the day after absence and pupil has not attended, the office team will inform DAL WH who may need to contact the home school.

Monitoring and intervention of ACE attendance

For pupils below 50% attendance, a meeting will be arranged with parents/carers and the home school to discuss this.

For some pupils they may require a home visit to identify reasons for absence and barriers to attendance. This may involve the CAMHS/ACE worker and a member of ACE staff.

Attendance Pathway – this is a personalised plan to support individual attendance and is reviewed and shared with staff on a weekly basis.

For pupils who continue to not attend ACE, a Review Meeting is arranged with the parent/carer and the home school to look at an alternative provision.

Key attendance strategies

As a whole school we will use the following strategies promoted by Liverpool LA, to ensure that the attendance of pupils is as high as it possibly can be.

- Raise everyone's expectations about what can be achieved.
- Ensure attendance is discussed as often as possible and is linked to the outcomes for pupils.
- Create a clear attendance action plan linked to the school development plan.
- Discuss with pupils what rewards are needed to promote positive attendance.
- Ensure that the office team follow-up on 'N' and 'O' marks, after the first day of absence, recording outcomes, and informing DALs who can decide on further actions to take.
- Clearly define attendance roles and responsibilities for all staff and families, ensuring improving attendance is everybody's business. In particular, ensure there is clarity between the roles of the DAL, the office team and any third party used as support.
- Clarify daily, weekly and monthly attendance routines including the scrutiny of data, from class teachers, through to the governing body.



- Clarify attendance procedures to ensure records of attendance interventions are clearly recorded for each child, and in particular when children are visibly seen, spoken to and noted to be safe and well. Consider how first day response is followed up.
- Evaluate first-day response activity and how attendance is then followed up on subsequent days. Consider attendance escalation procedures.
- Consider how individuals' attendance, class and whole school attendance is discussed regularly.
- Ensure that the progress against school and cohort attendance targets are discussed at all meetings and that governors and school leaders evaluate the impact of attendance strategies.
- Identify and implement strategies to remove barriers to attendance. Consider how pupils are supported once they return to school.
- Create further opportunities to celebrate attendance improvements in displays around school and activities including assemblies and form/tutor time. Embed attendance in school reports, newsletters and all key communications.
- Identify Persistent Absentee (PA 90%) cohort, and at risk of PA, and monitor their attendance.
- Identify Severe Absence (SA 50%) pupils and instigate intervention.
- Consider attendance-type contracts for those with the poorest attendance and individual attendance plans for all PAs.
- Liaise closely with all professionals supporting each pupil and their family, sharing attendance concerns.

To ensure our policy is effective we will ask the following questions as part of an evaluation of our provision and support to promote excellent attendance

1. The school has defined attendance roles and responsibilities for key staff. How well are these roles understood and is there evidence to support that the activity associated with each of the roles is being undertaken?

2. The school has developed its analysis of attendance data to include all groups of pupils and specific attendance codes. Is this done on a half-termly basis and shared with governors? Is the analysis supporting the school to refine its interventions and demonstrate clear improvements?

3. How successful is the rewards programme in promoting improvements in attendance? Do pupils tell you it motivates them? Are families aware?

4. Are pupils and parents clear about the child's current attendance and target for improvement? How is this communicated to them? Is communication sent home on a regular basis? How is attendance discussed with all pupils during structured lesson time? How is attendance discussed with the PA/SA cohort and those at risk of becoming PA/SA?

5. How effective is the school at recording and monitoring the impact of attendance interventions for the cohort identified as needing additional support? How is the analysis drawn upon to refocus the school's efforts for individual pupils.

6. Does the school continue to ensure there is safeguarding oversight of attendance data, examining patterns of unauthorised absence and missing from school?

Key reference documentation:

Working Together to Improve Attendance/ Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>



Appendix 1

Attendance Procedures for Office Team

Designated Attendance Lead DAL – Eric Kewley & Wendy Henshaw

1. Sandfield teachers must complete registers by 9am and 1:30pm, ACE teachers by 9.30 and 1pm. Office team to check arbor for any incomplete registers (blanks) and ring teacher to request them to complete.
2. On a daily basis the office team will go through the registers from 9am and 1.45pm (Sandfield) 9:30am and 1pm (ACE) for any 'N' codes, where no explanation has been received.
3. Initially school will attempt to contact the parent or carer via a text asking them to contact school with a reason for absence.
4. If there is no contact from the parent by 9.30 (Sandfield) or 10am/1.30 (ACE) the office will make a phone call home.
5. A second text will be made if there is still no communication/response from the parent/carers. Second text to be made by 11am (Sandfield/ACE) and 2pm (for ACE pupils attending afternoon sessions). "Your child's absence today will become unauthorised if you do not contact us with the reason for absence". For vulnerable pupils a phone call will be made instead of a text.
6. If contact is made between the parent/carers and school office, then the reason for absence and the appropriate code will be recorded for that day, on the register. Must input an absence code for illness (I), medical (M) when message/communication received. Or change an N code if register has already been taken. This needs to be done via 'planned absence' in first lesson of the morning or afternoon for ACE.
7. If the office is unsure what code should be used they will confirm with the DAL.
8. On those occasions where pupils come into school late, after 9am (Sandfield) and after 9.30/1pm (ACE), they will receive a Late.

ACE:

- The office can record the reason for lateness and register the L code on Arbor including number of minutes late or time of arrival.
 - If this is after 10.15 or 1.45 to record (C) for previous lessons that day
 - If a pupil goes home early ACE staff will escort pupil to reception. Office to record (I) and time of departure on register.
9. For ACE pupils the office will send emails to the home schools with attendance data on a daily basis after pm registration has taken place.
 10. If a pupil returns to school with no explanation of their absence from the parent/carers, the office team will attempt to contact the parent or carer. If required, a



text will be sent to them requesting this information. If there is still no explanation given, the office team will inform the DAL.

11. An 'N' code cannot be used for longer than five days, and must then become an authorised or unauthorised absence, as appropriate. The office will run a report on **Thursdays** and chase up any N codes for that week with parents. DAL will make a decision on **Fridays** for those absences who will be unauthorised and will request a text sent home to parents via the office, indicating that this is an unauthorised absence, until a valid explanation for absence is given. If there is still no response the DAL will follow up with parents.
12. The following unauthorised absence text will be sent by the office when requested by DAL. Text: **Please contact school with a reason for your child's absence this week as it is currently unauthorised.**

Specific Procedures also include the following:

- If a pupil is absent for a second consecutive day with no reason for absence the office team will phone home.
- If there is still no contact the school will ask the escort to put a letter through the child's letterbox asking parents to contact school straight away.
- If a pupil is present on the day following an absence with no reason provided the office team will phone home to confirm reason for absence on previous day/s.
- If the Sandfield teacher or ACE receive a message about an absence, they will need to amend the register accordingly.
- If there is no reason given for absence after this, the DAL will be informed.
- **ACE** only - If no contact received from parent/carer the day after absence and pupil has not attended, the office team to contact the home school. This will be sooner for more vulnerable children.



Daily Attendance Admin





Attendance Codes 2024

School Attendance Codes and Reasons

/ - Present (AM)
\ - Present (PM)
B - Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (not dual registration)
C - Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
D - Dual registered (at another establishment) - not counted in possible attendances
E - Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
G - Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
H - Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
I - Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
J - Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview
L - Late (before registers closed) marked as present
M - Authorised absence due to medical/ dental appointments
N - Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O - Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
P - Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
R - Authorised absence due to religious observance
S - Authorised absence due to study leave
T - Authorised absence due to traveller absence
U - Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
V - Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W - Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience
X - Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances
Y - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
- School closed to pupils