

Kisimul

# **EDAC04 | Acacia School**

## **Attendance**

Policy and Procedure

## Document Information

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<b>This document will be reviewed at least every 2 years, or sooner if legislation/guidance changes</b>	
<b>A full Change Log can be found at the back of this document</b>	

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

No person or group should suffer oppression or lack of opportunity because of a protected characteristic. Kisimul Group opposes all forms of unlawful discrimination, and we are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, fairness and inclusion in the application of our policies so that everyone has equal access and feels welcome and at ease. To achieve this aim, the application and accessibility of our policies, and the decisions and outcomes arising from our policies, may be monitored to ensure their use is fair, equal and consistent irrespective of any characteristic as may be defined by the *Equality Act 2010*. This is to ensure that we are listening to people and appropriately understanding their needs, and are tailoring the way we interact and publish or act on our policies to ensure we are promoting equal access and opportunity at all times.

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1.1** We expect all learners on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

**1.1.2** We do all we can to encourage learners to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all learners.

**1.1.3** DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* came into effect as statutory guidance in September 2024 and outlines expectations for monitoring school attendance and also management of unauthorised absence.

**1.1.4** The school keeps an Admission register and an Attendance register to record daily attendance.

**1.1.5** For all day learners of compulsory school age, our Attendance register records which learners are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. These are kept electronically by teachers and support staff, and close 30 minutes after school starts and after the afternoon sessions begin.

**1.1.6** The **Headteacher** will notify parents and carers of any school emergency closures for such things as extreme weather.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all learners and to everyone working at Acacia School.

## **3. Definitions**

### **3.1 Authorised Absence**

**3.1.1** An absence is classified as authorised when a child/young person has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. Legitimate reasons may include (but are not limited to):

- Sickness/illness – see link below for the time period an individual should not attend a setting to reduce the risk of transmission during the infectious stage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/children-and-young-people-settings-tools-and-resources>

- Medical or dental appointments.
- Religious observances.
- Visits to future schools.
- Exclusion.
- Family events such as weddings or bereavements.

**3.1.2** All requests for term time absence must be made in writing to the **Headteacher**, giving the school plenty of time to consider the request. Only the school can make an absence authorised – parents/carers do not have this authority.

### **3.2 Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child/young person is away from our school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carer. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child/young person is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

### **3.3 Persistent Absence**

A learner who misses more than 10% of learning, i.e. 1 day every 2 weeks, is deemed as having persistent absence for the purpose of this policy. An action plan to improve attendance would be expected to be in place in these circumstances.

### **3.4 Severe Absence**

Where a learner misses 50% of their educational attendance this would be defined as severe for the purposes of this policy. In these instances, a meeting would be called with the placing authority and parents and a joint action plan would be enacted in order to improve attendance and navigate barriers to attending.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 The Chief Executive Officer**

Has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with national and local standards that are reflected in the organisation's policies.

### **4.2 Headteachers**

Have overall responsibility for ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and that the school's policies are implemented consistently.

### **4.3 The School Attendance Champion**

Is Phil Rhodes ([phil.rhodes@kisimul.co.uk](mailto:phil.rhodes@kisimul.co.uk), 01673 880022), who is a member of the senior leadership team, reflecting the high priority that good attendance means for positive outcomes in the school. The Attendance Champion takes responsibility for monitoring and evaluating patterns of non-attendance, and also liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Leads where there are issues relating to non-attendance that are linked to welfare concerns.

### **4.4 Parents/Carers/Guardians**

Have the legal responsibility for ensuring that a young person of compulsory school (age 5 to 18) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## 5. Registers

The school is required to maintain two registers:

### 5.1 Admission Register

This gives particular information about learners who are currently registered as attending our school. For the purposes of day-to-day management of the school, the admission register will be contained within the school database, although site class groups and lists will be kept by the Headteachers. The register will comprise information that is compliant with regulations set out in *The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2014)* and paragraph 62 of the DfE *Working together to improve school attendance* statutory guidance (2024).

### 5.2 Attendance Register

**5.2.1** The school is required to ensure that the attendance register for all learners on the school roll is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. Each learner must be marked on the register in one of the following categories:

- Present.
- Engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site (approved by the Head Teacher, and supervised by a person approved by the **Headteacher**, including sporting activities, educational visits or residential trips).
- Absent.
- Unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (unavoidable closure of the school site or part of it).
- Authorised absence (granted leave of absence by the **Headteacher** or a person acting on their behalf; unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause; observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs).
- Unauthorised absence (if no reason is established when the register is taken, the entry may be corrected later when the reason is established).

**5.2.2** Guidance on the codes to use when marking the register can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

**5.2.3 Teachers**, in conjunction with the **Headteacher**, are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and responsible for following up absences in the appropriate way.

## **6. Failure to Attend**

**6.1.1** Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a learner of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification of absence. All other absences are treated as unauthorised. If a learner is absent without explanation when the register is taken, **school staff** will contact the parents/guardians/carers the same day. The absence will be treated as unauthorised unless an explanation is offered as satisfactory justification for absence.

**6.1.2** The class teacher would be expected to follow up directly with parents in the first instance, should they be concerned in respect of any potential welfare issue or lack of communication they should speak to the HT or Senior attendance champion. If they have welfare or safeguarding concerns the HT or senior attendance champion will liaise with the DSL. Initially, the school will try to resolve any problems, and this may include advice on the management of challenging presentation, or take the form of welfare visits to the family home. All children and young people at the school are admitted because of their complex learning and autism profile. The reasons for non-attendance can be varied. The school will work with parents and carers to provide clinical and therapeutic input in order to overcome any barriers to attendance and will work creatively to solve issues, for example adapting the start and finish times for a learner so there are opportunities to transition into the school without a heavier and bustling footfall and traffic. If necessary the school will liaise with external agencies such as brokering an Early Help referral where it is deemed the family may need additional support.

**6.1.3** The senior attendance champion and HT will report on the effectiveness of the school's attendance interventions and approaches as part of the governing board reporting processes, and will identify any whole school thematic issues, and also compare attendance to national statistics to benchmark the school's position.

**6.1.4** Kisimul Group has a legal duty to report certain attendance issues: ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence); failure to attend regularly, and deletion from the school register when the next provision is not known.

## **7. Long-Term Absence**

When a learner has an illness that means they will be away from our school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their school work. Any ongoing absences, late returns post-holiday periods, or unauthorised absences for holidays are followed up as quickly as possible.

## **8. Repeated Unauthorised Absences**

The school will contact the parent/carer of any learner who has an unauthorised absence. If a learner has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be

contacted by the school to discuss the problem and to support any solutions. Action plans will be identified and monitored for any learner who has patterns of persistent absence.

## **9. Special Measures and Requests for Leave of Absence**

**9.1.1** Kisimul is mindful that learners placed within the school may have challenging family dynamics as a result of their complex behaviour, and there may be justified need for some families to arrange visits home or short breaks when other vulnerable siblings are at school, or accommodation is available during quieter periods for autistic people.

**9.1.2** While each occasion will be considered on its own merits and will be considered by exception, the Headteacher will need to ensure that this is balanced carefully with the need for learners to access as full and uninterrupted an educational experience as possible, and the emphasis will be on these being exceptional circumstances, and the default position is not to grant term time leave of absence.

**9.1.3** If a parent/carer outlines an intention to remove a learner during term time, they must make a formal request to the school by completing a Term-Time Leave Request form ([Appendix 1](#)), which can be obtained from the school.

## **10. Monitoring Compliance**

Patterns of attendance will be monitored regularly by the **School Attendance Champion** and **Headteacher**.

## **11. Linked Documents**

### **11.1 Kisimul Policies**

**11.1.1** EDAC03 Acacia School Admissions Policy and Procedure

**11.1.2** EDAC07 Acacia School Accessibility Policy and Procedure

**11.1.3** EDAC10 Acacia School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure

### **11.2 Legislation**

**11.2.1** The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

**11.2.2** Education Act 2011

**11.2.3** Special Educational Need and Disability Act 2001

### **11.3 Statutory Guidance**

**11.3.1** Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2024)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

# Appendix 1 – Request for Term-Time Leave Form

To the Headteacher,

I wish to apply for term-time leave for my child/young person:

**Child/young person’s name:** .....

**Absence requested from:**..... **to** ..... (inclusive)

**The exceptional reason(s) for this request are as follows:**

**Signature** .....

**Print Name** ..... (parent/carer)

**Date** .....

Please make your request prior to making any arrangements, and preferably four weeks before the anticipated leave date. This form is not required for any absence related to medical interventions or procedures.

**NB: If the school denies your request and the child/young person is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, and the school will be obliged to contact the placing authority, who may decide to take further action.**

