



ATTENDANCE POLICY

2026

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Statement of Intent

At Ainslie Wood, we believe that attendance is about more than being present in school. Attendance is about belonging.

Children are more likely to attend, engage and succeed when they feel safe, valued, connected and included. We recognise that attendance, wellbeing, behaviour, safeguarding and learning are closely linked and that regular attendance is essential for children to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

We work in partnership with families to promote excellent attendance and to remove barriers where difficulties arise. Our approach combines high expectations with high levels of support. We seek to understand concerns, provide timely intervention and work collaboratively with children and families to secure positive outcomes.

We aspire for all pupils to achieve attendance of at least 96%, with the goal of every child attending every day, unless they are too unwell to do so.

This policy is informed by:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Waltham Forest Local Authority Guidance

The Ainslie Wood Attendance Approach

Our attendance approach is based on four key principles:

UNDERSTAND



SUPPORT



IMPROVE



SUSTAIN

When attendance concerns arise, our first priority is to understand the barriers affecting attendance. We then work alongside families to provide support, improve attendance and sustain positive outcomes over time.

Shared Expectations

School:

- Provide a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment where every child feels they belong.
- Promote a positive culture of attendance across the school.
- Monitor attendance regularly and identify concerns early.
- Work collaboratively with families to understand barriers and provide support.
- Celebrate positive attendance and meaningful improvement.
- Ensure attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Notify the school of absence before 9:00am on each day of absence.
- Avoid unnecessary absence and term-time holidays.
- Engage positively with support and intervention where attendance becomes a concern.

Pupils

We encourage pupils to:

- Attend school every day.

- Arrive on time and ready to learn.
- Take pride in their attendance.
- Seek support if they are worried about attending school.

Attendance Monitoring and Graduated Response

Attendance is reviewed regularly by school leaders and discussed with teaching staff to ensure concerns are identified and addressed promptly.

95% - 100%

Universal Provision

- Attendance promoted and celebrated.
- Positive communication with families.
- Attendance monitored routinely.

90% - 94.9%

Attendance Concern

Attendance has fallen below the school's expected level.

Actions may include:

- Attendance monitoring.
- Conversation with parent/carer.
- Attendance letter.
- Exploration of barriers.
- Early support where required.

Below 90%

Persistent Absence

A pupil is considered Persistently Absent (PA) under Department for Education guidance.

Actions may include:

- Senior leader involvement.
- A safeguarding review
- Attendance meetings with parents/carers.

- Attendance Action Plan.
- Increased monitoring.
- Consideration of SEND, SEMH or safeguarding factors.
- Early Help referral where appropriate.

Below 85%

Significant Attendance Concern

Actions may include:

- Senior leader involvement.
- A safeguarding review.
- Home visit.
- Multi-agency support.
- Attendance contract.
- BACME involvement where appropriate.
- Consideration of legal intervention.

Below 50%

Severe Absence

Severe absence is a safeguarding concern and requires intensive support.

Actions may include:

- Immediate safeguarding review.
- Multi-agency planning.
- BACME involvement.
- Children's Social Care consultation where appropriate.
- Individual attendance support plan.
- Frequent review meetings.

Lateness

Good attendance includes arriving at school on time. Punctuality helps children settle calmly, build positive routines and maximise learning opportunities.

Patterns of lateness will be monitored and addressed through a graduated response, including communication with families and support where needed.

Persistent lateness may result in formal attendance procedures being implemented.

Absence Procedures

Parents and carers must notify the school before 9:00am on the first day of absence.

Where no reason for absence has been received, the school will make contact with parents or carers on the first day of absence as part of its safeguarding responsibilities.

Where concerns arise regarding unexplained absence, the school will follow local authority procedures and Children Missing Education guidance.

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

We recognise that some attendance difficulties arise from emotional distress, anxiety or unmet need.

Where EBSNA is identified or suspected, we will:

- Work collaboratively with the child and family.
- Seek to understand barriers to attendance.
- Consider SEND and SEMH needs.
- Develop an appropriate support plan.
- Liaise with relevant professionals.
- Use graduated reintegration where appropriate.

Our aim is to support children back into education in a way that is sustainable and responsive to their individual needs.

Attendance and Safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding priority. Unexplained absence will always be followed up as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Poor attendance may be an indicator of unmet need, vulnerability or wider safeguarding concerns.

Attendance concerns will always be considered alongside information relating to wellbeing, behaviour, SEND and safeguarding to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

Concerns will be recorded and monitored through CPOMS and escalated where necessary.

Supporting Attendance

We believe that early intervention is key.

Support may include:

- Attendance meetings.
- Home visits.
- Pastoral support.
- Early Help involvement.
- Family support.
- SEND review.
- SEMH support.
- External agency involvement.

Our aim is to remove barriers and enable every child to access education successfully.

Celebrating Attendance

We recognise and celebrate both good attendance and meaningful improvement.

This may include:

- Weekly class recognition.
- Celebration assemblies.
- Certificates and awards.
- Positive communication with families.
- Whole-school attendance initiatives.

We value progress and recognise that improvements in attendance are often the result of significant effort from children and families.

Monitoring and Review

Attendance data will be reviewed regularly by school leaders and reported to governors.

The school will monitor:

- Whole-school attendance.
- Persistent absence.
- Severe absence.
- Lateness.
- Attendance of vulnerable groups.
- Attendance trends and disproportionality.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where required by changes to legislation, guidance or school priorities.

Conclusion

At Ainslie Wood, we believe that attendance is everyone's responsibility.

By working together to promote belonging, remove barriers and maintain high expectations, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend, participate and thrive.