

## **Ethos**

Azhar Academy Nursery & Primary School is committed to the principles stated in this policy document. We sincerely believe that all students benefit from the education we provide, and therefore, from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all students achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any barriers, which may impede full attendance, are addressed as quickly as possible.

Azhar Academy Nursery & Primary School recognises the importance of attendance in school and is fully aware of the correlation between high levels of attendance and attainment.

Azhar Academy Nursery & Primary School takes the issue of poor punctuality very seriously. When a pupil arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson/school day. This reduces their chances of academic success. Poor punctuality can also cause social disruption – children and young people may feel uncomfortable and embarrassed arriving to the classroom when everyone else is already settled. In fact, when one pupil arrives late it disrupts the teacher and the rest of the class, compromising everyone's learning.

We seek to provide an environment and foster an ethos where high levels of attendance/punctuality are the norm, while providing support and encouragement to improve, whenever high levels of attendance/punctuality are not achieved.

Azhar Academy Nursery & Primary School is committed to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and fully recognises the impact that attendance/punctuality has on the five outcomes of the agenda.

## **Aims**

Azhar Academy Nursery & Primary School aims to ensure that:

- All students have an equal right and access to, an education in accordance with the school's Islamic Studies syllabus alongside the National Curriculum.
- No student will be deprived of their educational opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students.
- The attendance percentage for each child remains above the target threshold of 95% at all times and that of punctuality above the target threshold of 95%.

## **Expectations**

Azhar Academy Nursery & Primary School expects that all our students will:

- Attend nursery/school regularly
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day
- Carry out any work provided by the school during an authorised leave period.

Azhar Academy Nursery & Primary School expects that parents will:

- Endeavour to arrange health appointments out of school hours wherever possible
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may prevent their child from attending school
- Fulfill their legal responsibilities and ensure their child attends school punctually
- Contact school as soon as possible and preferably early in the morning of absence or lateness, whenever their child is unable to attend school or will arrive late
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence

Parents and children can expect the following from the school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance/punctuality
- Early contact when a student is absent/late without explanation
- Action on any attendance/punctuality problem notified to the school
- Referral of specific attendance/punctuality issues to supporting agencies where appropriate

## School timings

### NURSERY

The nursery operates the following sessions: -

Timings	Start Time	End Time
Morning session	8.30am	11.30pm
Afternoon session	12.30am	3.30pm
30 hours full day funded (for eligible parents)	8.30am	2.30pm

The doors open at 8.30am & 12.30pm for drop off and 11.30am, 2.30pm & 3.30pm for collection. Doors close after 10 minutes of these drop and collection times.

**Lateness:** Any child arriving after this will be recorded as late and will be required to enter through the main entrance to be registered.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL

School starts at 08:40 am with an end at 3.40 pm

**Lateness:** Primary School parent's entrance closes at 8.45am. Any child arriving after 8.45am will enter the school via the main office entrance and will be marked in as late.

### **It is recognised that:**

- The majority of students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peers and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society
- Some students and their parents may need to be supported in meeting their attendance/punctuality obligations and responsibilities
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure their child's attendance/punctuality at school as required by law (Section 10, Education Act 2004).

### **School Register**

The register is called promptly at **8.40am & 12.50pm** by class teachers and **8.30am & 12.30am** for Nursery children.

The register will close at: **8.40am & 12.40pm** for Nursery and **8.50am & 1.00pm** for Primary School.

Any child who arrives **after** the register closes will be counted as **absent**.

### **First day calling**

AAPS has a system in place for first-day calling. Parents will be telephoned at 9.15am on the first day a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for absence. If we are unable to get through a voicemail message will be left along with a text requesting to call the school office. If a call is not returned by 9.30am a second attempt will be made to call followed by a call to the first emergency contact number provided to establish how contact can be made with the parent or if they are aware of the reason parents are not contactable.

Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will be required to make a prompt home visit. If contact is still unable to be made, the police will be called in order to establish the wellbeing of the child.

### **Early Years Stance on Absence**

Nursery and Reception children are funded by the Local Authority for attending 15 hours a week for 38 weeks. As stated in their policy (section 2.1.10 FEEE guidance) they will not reimburse funding for absent children if they are booked to attend their free entitlement but are absent for a short period, such as illness or a holiday of up to two weeks and no fees can be charged for absence related to the free entitlement during this time. ***They will however, use discretion where a child's absence is recurring, or is for***

***extended periods. Where this occurs, we have a duty to contact the LA to discuss and clarify funding for the child.***

**We encourage attendance/punctuality by:**

- Consistent, clear communication with parents and students about the importance of regular, attendance/punctuality
- Setting targets for improved attendance/punctuality and sharing these with Governors, parents and students
- The accurate completion of registers at the start of each session, and within 15 minutes of the start of each session

**The school will respond to non-attendance by:**

1. Contacting parents on the first day of an absence if no reason for absence has been received.
2. (In case where the reason for absence is extended (more than one day) or persistent illness\*, evidence to confirm this will be required the next day the student attends school. Evidence can be in the form of a Doctor's letter, copy of medical prescription or the label on prescribed medicine. Failure to provide such evidence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorized.
3. Where a pattern of persistent non-attendance is emerging (normally two unauthorized absences within two weeks), the parent/guardian will be written to and invited to visit the school to see the Headteacher in order to help resolve the difficulties and to enable close target setting as well as to raise expectations.
4. Where there is no response to school intervention and/or where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted without satisfactory explanation, the school will refer the matter to the LA Education Welfare Officer.
5. Where there is clear evidence that excessive absence has led to under-attainment, and where there has been an unsatisfactory response to school intervention from the student concerned and their family, the school reserves the right to permanently exclude the student from its roll.

***\* While we don't expect any child to attend school when ill, we do urge parents to very carefully consider not sending them to school for minor ailments, eg. a mild headache. Such unnecessary absences severely hinder their academic progress.***

**The school will respond to lateness by:**

1. Where a pattern of persistent lateness is emerging (normally four late arrivals within a period of two weeks), the parent/guardian will be written to via email and invited to visit the school to see the School Manager/ Head Teacher in order to help resolve the difficulties and to enable close target setting as well as to raise expectations.
2. Imposing a penalty of **£10.00** per lateness absence, for late morning attendance, in order to desist persistent lateness. Any fine imposed will be issued in writing clearly stating dates and times of lateness. All fines must be paid within two weeks of issue date.
1. Where there is no response to school intervention and/or where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted without satisfactory explanation, the school will refer the matter to the LA Education Welfare Officer.
2. As a final resort, the school will refuse to re-register the student for the next academic year, or in cases where attendance is extremely poor and has clearly resulted in the pupil's under-attainment, the school reserves the right to permanently exclude the student from its roll.

***Any parent/guardian that is late collecting their child will have to pay a charge which helps to pay the additional staffing costs incurred for this reason. The charge is £10 after the first 10 minutes, then £5 for every 5 minutes thereafter.***

**The School's Procedures to Improve Attendance:**

Daily:

- Admin. To check registers
- Telephone parents on 1st day if no message

Weekly:

- · Admin - Check registers and refer to Office Manager any concerns
- · Class teachers pass on concerns to office
- · Letters, phone calls or visits to parents if no reason given
- Weekly attendance award given to year group with highest attendance

#### Termly:

- Awards for full attendance given out at start of new term
- Issue fixed penalty notices to parents who are persistently absent or have poor punctuality.
- Summary report and analysis of figures by:
  - 1 Whole school %
  - 2 Individual pupils %
  - 3 Lateness

#### Annually:

- Analysis as above
- Issue fixed penalty notices to parents who are persistently absent or have poor punctuality.
- Awards (small gift) for excellent attendance
- End of year report giving figures for the year

### **Holiday Absence**

It is important that children attend school regularly to achieve their full potential. Children who miss out on school can feel vulnerable and left behind. Family requested absence in term-time is very disruptive and can seriously affect the child's education.

Parents **do not have the automatic right** to remove their children from school during term-time. By law, they are required to make an application to the school before taking their children out of school during term-time. It is absolutely at the Headteacher's discretion to decide whether or not an absence should be authorized. The Headteacher will only authorize absence in term time when there are genuinely exceptional reasons for a child to miss school.

Absence in term-time will only be authorised if parents or guardians make a request to the school sufficiently in advance on the appropriate form and can sufficiently demonstrate that there are genuinely exceptional reasons why the absence has to be in term-time. Parents are advised against making any arrangements or plans prior to obtaining authorization in writing from the Headteacher.

In determining whether a child's absence will be authorized, the Headteacher reserves the right to ask for reasonable evidence pertaining to the absence. For example, evidence of flight tickets and passport with confirmation of outbound and inbound dates, letter from GP and/or Hospital, evidence of national strikes etc.

#### **The cost, convenience or availability of a particular holiday will not be taken into consideration.**

If an absence has not been authorised by the Headteacher and parents or guardians remove their child from school, their child's absence will be recorded as unauthorized in the class register.

Absence for performing 'Umrah or Hajj may be agreed by the Headteacher, but will not exceed 5 days. This will only be applicable if the child is going for 'Umrah or Hajj, proof of which will have to be provided to the school. Hajj/ Umrah leave will not be granted if it is part of a connecting holiday ie 1 week for umrah followed by or before another consecutive trip to another country. A trip solely to take a umrah/hajj trip will be granted. Umrah leave will also not be granted for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils as these years are crucial due to children sitting their SATs examinations. However, Umrah leave for 5 days can be granted after the SATs have taken place. Again, the discretion on whether or not to grant approval for 'Umrah or Hajj, will remain with the Headteacher absolutely.

Parents or guardians who take their children out of school without permission, either without applying for permission at all or despite having been refused permission, **will** be issued with fixed penalties of **£50 per child, per day**, of unauthorized absence and may face possible prosecution in court on charges of truancy. This charge is in addition to school fees due to breach of school policies. All unauthorized

absences equivalent to a period of ten or more consecutive school days will automatically result in the removal of the absent child from the school's registers and the matter will immediately be referred to relevant authorities.

Any child whose annual attendance percentage is below 85% and/or punctuality percentage below 75% will not be offered a place at the school for the following academic year.

### **Changing School**

It is important for the school to be notified as soon as parents decide they wish to move their child to a different school. A student will not be removed from the school roll until parents have completed and signed the "Confirmation for Student Leaving" form. This form requests the following vital information required by AAPS in order to process the decision:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school;
- The new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. If a parent /carer appears to have removed their child from school or the child has completely stopped attending without providing the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

**Date Reviewed:** January 2022

**Next review date:** January 2023