



## **Ashlands Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

***"Everybody is responsible for keeping the child safe"***

**This policy embodies our Ethos Statement – Safe Children at Ashlands**

### **1. Introduction**

Ashlands Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality to all its pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We recognise that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance.

For a child to reach their full educational potential they must attend school regularly and punctually. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring excellent school attendance and all have important roles to play. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if and when a problem is identified

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school Attendance and Punctuality policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

### **2. School's 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 our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day.

The School Administrator (as Attendance Officer) will oversee, direct and coordinate the school in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance and Punctuality policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

The school will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with relevant personnel and pupils and parents where needed are regularly reminded about the importance of good school attendance. The Education Welfare Officer is available to work with the school to monitor attendance and support the school with children/families that are causing concern.

To promote a pattern of regular attendance and punctuality the school will:

- provide a welcoming and safe learning environment for children;
- report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance record through the annual report;
- contact parents/carers should the child's attendance fall below the school's required level;
- remind parents and children of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality through assemblies, letters, the school prospectus and the Home/School agreement.

### **3. Parents' Responsibility**

Ashlands Primary School expects parents/carers to:

- ensure their child attends school regularly;
- support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect school to automatically agree to any requests for absence;
- ensure their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, rested and fed and with the right equipment (e.g. PE kit);
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' consultation meetings and take an interest in their child's work as outlined in the Home/School Agreement;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's lives;
- ensure all contact details that are held by school are correct and up to date.

In the case of their child being off school for any reason other than an already authorised request, we will expect parents/carers to:

- telephone or visit school on the first day of absence. Unless circumstances make it unavoidable, contact should be made by 10:00 am. A message should be left on the answer phone if there is no one available to answer. If the school have not been made aware of the absence then parents will be contacted by telephone to explain the reason for absence;
- a follow up letter is not obligatory but may be requested in case of prolonged absence;
- organise all medical and dental appointments wherever possible outside of school time. If this is not feasible parents should inform school prior to any medical or dental appointment taking place and if asked provide a copy of the appointment letter. Medical and dental appointments or any other appointments should not require a full day's absence.

## **4. Types of Absence**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once at the start of the afternoon session. Every half-day absence from school is classified as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes authorised by Headteacher. For absences to be authorised by the Headteacher these must be in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances to be decided at the Headteacher's discretion on a case by case basis.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions such as fixed penalty notices and include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained to the satisfaction of the headteacher;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed with the Headteacher.

Any child may be off school because they are ill. However, children can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent feels that their child is reluctant to attend the school then we will work with them to try to understand and resolve the underlying problem. The school can make use of outside agencies ie school nurse, health visitor or parental involvement worker.

A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

## **5. Persistent Absenteeism**

It is the duty of the school to monitor the attendance record of all pupils and will act if a child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level can do considerable damage to a child's education and the school will require the parent's fullest support and co-operation to improve matters. The school recognises the links between attendance and attainment and attendance and safeguarding children.

Inappropriate authorisation can be damaging to a child's education and can send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and could render children vulnerable to harm.

We will thoroughly monitor all absence as well as the reasons given. Any case that is deemed to have reached an unreasonable level or is at risk of doing so will be investigated. These pupils will then be tracked and monitored carefully to see whether the absence affects their attainment.

The following procedure will be followed:

1. if the classteacher has not received a satisfactory reason for absence they will first approach the parent to ascertain the reason for the child's absence;
2. if the explanation is not satisfactory or the child's attendance continues to decline then the parents will be contacted by the school's attendance officer and asked to explain their child's continuous absence. The parent will be informed of the need for regular attendance and asked that they make every effort to ensure their child attends school regularly;
3. if there is no improvement the school will inform the parent, formally in writing, that they are to be interviewed by the Headteacher to explain the reasons for absence;
4. at this meeting the parent will be informed that the child will only be allowed absence from school for illness either agreed by the Headteacher and/or after consulting with a Doctor who will provide a record for school. The child's attendance will be monitored for one month from an agreed date;
5. as a last resort, if there is no significant improvement then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer from the local authority.

## **6. Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and vital information from the class teacher. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. This also applies to lateness in collecting the child at the end of the school day. Good time keeping (and the example of good time keeping) is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life.

The school bell rings at 8:55 am and we expect our children to be in the playground and lined up ready to go into class when the bell is rung.

Registers are taken at 9:00 am and any child who is not in class when the register has been taken will receive a late mark.

Any child who arrives after 9:15 am without prior notification to the school office or the classteacher will be deemed to have an unauthorised absence unless a suitable reason agreed by the Headteacher has been given.

If a child is persistently late the parent will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to try to resolve the problem and strategies put in place to improve matters. Again, if there is no significant improvement then the EWO will be contacted.

## **7. Holidays in Term Time**

Headteachers are not able to grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances to be decided at the Headteacher's discretion on a case by case basis. Exceptional circumstances are likely to be one-off situations due to a parent's employment conditions or a crisis or bereavement in the family.

Parents are urged to apply only when absolutely necessary and to keep the number of requests to an absolute minimum.

The school holiday dates are published well in advance of the start of the school year and we strongly recommend that parents gain consent for any holiday in term time before booking their holiday.

We will not agree to leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- when a pupil is just starting school. This is a very important time as the child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly and easily as possible;
- immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) for year 6 pupils;
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence;
- where a pupil's attendance rate is already below the school's target for any individual or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation has been received and agreed by the Headteacher.

Any child who is persistently absent and then takes a holiday in term time could be fined through the Local Authority.

## **8. Targets & Monitoring**

The minimum level of attendance for any individual child at Ashlands Primary School is above 95%. The target for the whole school is also a minimum level of attendance above 95% because we recognise that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we will monitor requests for leave, absences and punctuality which will indicate to us where improvements need to be made in order for us to achieve these targets.

## **9. Changing Schools**

It is important if parents decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Ashlands as soon as possible.

Parents are asked to provide in writing:

- The date the child is expected to leave school
- The expected date that the child will be starting at the next school
- The name, address and telephone number of the new school.
- The child's new address if known.

The classteacher will prepare manual records for the parent or the school administrator to forward to the new school. The administrator will prepare and upload the electronic records to the new school. The child will then be removed from the school roll.

The governing body reviews this policy and considers any amendments in the light of the annual review findings.

Last Reviewed: July 2022

The Policy will be reviewed annually

