



ASHTON KEYNES C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for attendance at Ashton Keynes C of E Primary School.

Updated: November 2019
Review Date: November 2022

Overall Policy Statement

“Children can only take full advantage of their education if they attend school regularly and punctually.”

We support the Department for Education (DfE) and Local Authority (LA) guidance on School Attendance and the role of the Education Welfare Service (1998). The Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a key function in working closely with schools, families, and other agencies to promote excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96%+ - An excellent level of attendance. This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

94 -95% - A good level of attendance but there is scope to make it better.

85 – 93% - Absence might now be affecting attainment and progress at school.

Below 85% - Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. The school will work with you and the Local Authority to improve your child's attendance.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can authorise absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

If a child's attendance falls below 93%, no further illness will be authorised without a medical certificate.

In Ashton Keynes CE Primary we aim to have a whole school attendance rate of 97%.

Attendance will affect the school's overall judgement in Ofsted no matter how well the school is performing.

Make every minute count

Attending school every day = 100% attendance.

Attending 4 ½ days a week = 90% attendance = 4 weeks missed per year

Attending 4 days a week = 80% attendance = more than half a term missed per year or 2 full years missed over the course of their school career.

Attending 3 ½ days each week = 70% attendance = more than a quarter of the school year missed.

An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school

Being late for school reduces learning time.

If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year.

If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss is 2 weeks of learning each year.

Your child arriving late to school means they miss learning at the start to the day and also affects the concentration and learning of others in the class.

Rewards

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

The school will present attendance merits 3 times a year for pupils with 100% attendance to encourage pride in attendance and punctuality.

Individual Incentives

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

Individual sticker rewards are sometimes employed as an additional incentive where appropriate; these are designed according to the child's particular need.

Responsibilities

At Ashton Keynes C of E Primary School we offer a partnership between staff, children, parents and governors. We aim to provide a Christian, caring and stimulating environment, which enables children to learn, achieve their full potential, and thus prepare them to take full advantage of the next stage of their education

Schools are responsible for supporting the attendance of their children and for dealing with problems, which may lead to non-attendance.

School Responsibility – THE LAW and School Attendance

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated, each regulation applies to all schools in England.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 restricts authorised leave of absence to be for families with exceptional circumstances. The decision rests with the school and all applications for absence requests must be made in advance by the parent the pupil normally resides with.
- The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007 require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall absence targets, and for some governing bodies to set “focused absence targets” as required by the Secretary of State. School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the
- Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.
- The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Attendance Administration staff.
- Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.
- It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court.
- Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class register twice per day at the start of each session.
- The Headteacher, not parents, authorises absence; Ashton Keynes C of E Primary adhere to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

Schools should:

- Maximize attendance rates. The school must give high priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Support parents in ensuring regular and punctual attendance.
- Respond promptly to any issue that may lead to non-attendance or irregular attendance.
- Ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available.
- Identify what is considered as authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents – for example; we need to recognise that some parents are reluctant to come into school; some parents have difficulty in understanding written communications.
- Be sensitive to individual children’s needs.
- Ensure the accurate completion of attendance registers. All staff should adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absences and lateness. (See Appendix B)
- Provide effective liaison with Secondary transfer schools regarding children with attendance problems.
- Communicate Attendance Policy clearly to all parents – this policy will be distributed to all new parents and also posted onto our school website www.akps.org.uk
- Inform & involve Governors.
- Maintain good relations with the designated Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Take note of LA and DfE advice and guidance.

Parents & Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that the children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents choose to fulfill this responsibility by registering their children at school.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child’s regular attendance – they should:

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and “in a condition” to learn. (i.e. not too tired or too hungry to learn)
- Work in partnership with the school to help their child gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- Work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child’s school career, to reinforce policies / arrangements on home learning, behaviour and approach to learning, to attend parents’ evenings and other meetings when necessary.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies to resolve issues relating to non-attendance.

- Notify the school if their child is absent and give the reason. This needs to be done on each day of absence before 9.00am. Parents should also provide an explanation for each absence. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child. They will call before 9.30am.
- Avoid arranging medical or dental appointments during school hours and, unless unavoidable, not to book holidays during term time.
- Consult school prior to any holiday in term time and complete permission form. (Available from school office and website) – [Appendix A](#). The head teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time, except in exceptional circumstances.

Leave for exceptional circumstances

From September 2013 the law changed relating to children's attendance at school. **Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time except in exceptional circumstances.** The school will judge each holiday request individually, taking into consideration:

- The time of year for the proposed trip
- If it's close to any assessment dates
- Your child's overall attendance record
- Any leave already taken in the school year
- The age and stage of education of your child
- The ability of your child to catch up the work that they have missed
- The reason why you are taking the time off during term time

Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances:

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, family funeral or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival.
- If a parent, due to nature of the work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays. This would need to be evidenced by a letter from the employer. Factors indicated above will still be taken in to account.

Please note to have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Penalty notices can be issued if your child is absent from school without permission. The Head teacher may consult with Governors and the EWO in deciding whether or not leave may be granted. Further details and the application form can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Local Authority

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) fulfills the statutory duty to ensure regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

Its responsibilities are to:

- Promote the excellent attendance of all pupils in Wiltshire.
- Work in close partnership with all maintained schools in Wiltshire. Each school is allocated an Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The school has an annual visit to:

- Identify children who are experiencing attendance difficulties. This includes an examination of attendance registers.
- Agree on action that needs to be taken by the school and/or the EWS.
- Feedback and exchange information in relation to work, which has been undertaken by the EWS and/or the school.
- Identify areas of concern and of good practice in relation to attendance matters.
- Offer advice on strategies for improving attendance.
- To meet the Service Level Agreement (SLA) which it discusses with each school. The SLA states the number of consultation visits, which the school will receive during the academic year. It describes the services provided by the EWS and includes a quality assurance statement.

Attendance Registers

Attendance registers are legal documents which may be regarded as evidence in court. They must be completed on SIMS and checked by the office.

Registers must be kept on SIMS. There is no legal requirement for parents' notes to be retained, but if a child attends irregularly and there is the possibility of legal action, it may be sensible to keep notes for a time. See APPENDIX B for attendance/absence codes

The register will be taken at the beginning of each session and marked according to the agreed codes. Registers are taken by the class teacher daily in the morning at **8:50am** and in the afternoon at **1.15pm**. Registers are completed using the electronic SIMS system and attendance tracked.

Schools must distinguish in the attendance register between authorised and unauthorised absences. Children who are not in school at the time the register is taken will be coded. 10 minutes late is marked as L for late and children who arrive 15+ minutes late, when the register is closed will be marked as unauthorised for that session unless the school is contacted with a valid reason for absence that session.

It is not intended that any child should arrive at school late continually. If a child arrives after the gates close at 9am, they must enter with their parent/carer via the main office and sign into the late registration book. The Headteacher will monitor this book, teacher will speak to parents in the first instance but will refer to the Headteacher if the situation does not improve and pupils are regularly arriving late to school. The Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the parents/carers to discuss the late arrival in detail and agree a plan of action to stop it happening.

Children for whom no reason for absence is given or for whom the reason is deemed unsuitable, will be marked with an "unauthorised absence" code for that session. This will be followed up with the parents and, if appropriate, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be notified.

(NB A session = a morning or an afternoon) There are therefore 2 sessions in a school day.

All contacts with parents regarding attendance problems should, in the first instance, be on an informal basis via letter, phone call or face to face conversation. If this fails to solve the problem, a formal meeting will be convened. Where a formal meeting is held, the Head teacher and Chair of Governors will represent the school. If necessary, reference will be made to the EWO for further consultation and advice.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- School's attendance is remotely monitored
- Annual visit from the Education Welfare Officer to check attendance, completion of registers and to discuss any issues arising.
- First day and every day follow up of any absent child by Admin Officer.
- Regular encouragement by all staff about importance of regular attendance.
- Advance notice in newsletters of examination dates, stressing urgency for all children to be in school.
- On line calendar on our school website www.akps.org.uk with dates for the year.
- Termly check of copies of leave of absence forms (exceptional circumstances)
- Attendance rates included on each child's annual school report.
- Review policy every 4 years unless there are specific changes from the DfE or Wiltshire County Council

Links with other policies

- Home School Agreement
- Behaviour Policy
- Personal, Social, Health Education & Citizenship
- Child Protection
- Special Educational Needs

Appendices

- A. Permission form to take a child on holiday during school time and explanation letter
- B. Attendance/Absence codes for registers

This policy is based on the LA assessment of what constitutes good practice. In providing its advice, the LA consulted with the DfE and considered the relevant Education Act amendments.

Further advice about:

- The use of legal action
- Grounds for deleting a child from the school admission register
- Registered pupils who “disappear” or may be at risk

is available from the Education Welfare Service.

Appendix A

Leave for exceptional circumstances

2015

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to remind you of the law relating to holidays / leave of absence in term time. Please see our attendance policy on our website www.akps.ork.uk for more information.

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96%+ - An excellent level of attendance. This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

94 -95% - A good level of attendance but there is scope to make it better.

85 – 93% - Absence might now be affecting attainment and progress at school.

Below 85% - Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. The school will work with you and the Local Authority to improve your child's attendance.

Holidays during term time -the law

Details from the Department for Education are as follows:

Term Time leave of absence:

The 2013 amendments make clear that:

1. **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, except in exceptional circumstances.**
2. *Only in exceptional circumstances, if leave is granted the Headteacher must determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.*
3. The application must be made to the Headteacher well in advance of the leave by a parent/carer the child normally lives with.

Applications should be made as far in advance of the leave as possible and **you should speak to the school before you book your leave.**

STOP / PAUSE/ THINK

About the effect Leave of Absence in term time has on your child

- Any Term-time absence **clearly has an impact on any child's education** which can be critical in some year groups and especially at certain times of the year.
- Leave in term time is not a right and will not normally be granted. Holiday Prices, and the fact that parents/carers have booked a holiday before checking with school, are not accepted as special reasons.
- Holidays/Absences in term time are extremely disruptive for both pupils and teaching staff.
- Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively

Make every minute count

Attending school every day = 100% attendance.

Attending 4 ½ days a week = 90% attendance = 4 weeks missed per year

Attending 4 days a week = 80% attendance = more than half a term missed per year or 2 full years missed over the course of their school career.

Attending 3 ½ days each week = 70% attendance = more than a quarter of the school year missed.

An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school
Lateness-Being late for school reduces learning time. If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year. If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss 2 weeks of learning each year. Late arrival disrupts your child's learning and that of others. Please be reminded that lateness is recorded in the office signing-in book once the gates are closed and registers close after 15 minutes at 9.10am so if your child is late beyond 15 minutes (after 9.10am), they will be marked with an unauthorised absence unless a valid reason is given.

Rewards- The school will be issuing attendance merits 3 times per year in December, March and July at the end of each term for 100% attendance to encourage children to take a pride in their attendance.

The school thanks you for your cooperation and understanding.

How do schools consider *exceptional circumstance leave of absence* requests?

Schools will judge each request individually, taking into consideration:

- The time of year for the proposed trip
- If it's close to any assessment dates
- Your child's overall attendance record
- Any leave already taken in the school year
- The age and stage of education of your child
- The ability of your child to catch up the work that they have missed
- The reason why you are taking the time off during term time

Whilst absence **may** be granted during term time, **it is entirely the school's decision and is not a parental right.**

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence

The law states you could be issued with a penalty notice if your child is absent from school without permission. Penalty notices can be issued by:

- Local Councils
- Headteachers
- The Police

Every adult who is legally responsible for ensuring their child or children attend school will have to pay a separate penalty notice. For example, in cases where two parents are legally responsible for their child's school attendance, **EACH PARENT** will receive a separate penalty notice for **EACH CHILD**.

- When paid within 21 days of receiving the letter £60 per child
- When paid between 21 and 28 days of receiving the letter £120 per child

So, if **two** children go on an **unauthorised leave of absence**, then **each parent** will have to pay £120 each, if it is paid within 21 days, making a total of £240, or if paid between 21 and 28 days then £240 each, making a total of £480 and if you fail to pay a penalty fine within 42 days you can be prosecuted.

Therefore, if a leave of absence request is not authorised you are advised not to take your child out of school.

The Governors and staff of Ashton Keynes School will fully support the Headteacher's decision in the consideration process.

More information about this is available at the following website.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Yours sincerely

S.L.Saville
Headteacher

S.Harris
Chair of Governors

ASHTON KEYNES C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL
Leave for Exceptional Circumstances Application Form

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at school. Leave in term time can disrupt the educational progress and interrupt continuity of teaching and learning. If you wish to ask the Head teacher to authorise leave for exceptional circumstances please complete this form. Requests will only be authorised where there is evidence of exceptional circumstances.

If you remove your child from school without approval, their absence will be documented as unauthorised and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Name of Child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for the following reason/s:	
From: _____ to: _____	
Number of days my child will be absent from school:	
This cannot be taken during the school holidays because:	
Evidence of exceptional circumstances:	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES/NO	
If YES, please give details:	
I also have children attending (name of other school/s):	
Signed: Printed:	Date:
To be completed by Head Teacher & returned to parent	
Child's attendance (%) and number of missed sessions in the current academic year:	
Child's attendance (%) and number of missed sessions in the last academic year:	
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:	
Approved	The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved	The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Explanatory notes:	
Signed: Head Teacher	Date:

Appendix B

Attendance / Absence codes for registers

ASHTON KEYNES C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL
Codes for Registers

PRESENT CODES

Main codes for normal attendance

- Λ** Usual code to indicate child in school
- L** Late arrival but before register closes - After 8.50am until 9.10am is late. 9.10am is when registers close and arrival after this time without good reason will be unauthorised for the session.
- V** Educational visit – residential or day trip – children should not be marked using the normal attendance code when they are off site
- P** Approved Sporting Activity
- B** Home educated

ABSENCE CODES – AUTHORISED

- M** Medical / Dental appointments
- I** Illness – NOT medical appointment
- H** Holiday – with permission
- C** Special circumstances – agreed special occasion – wedding, funeral, visiting another school, etc.
- T** Traveller child – travelling
- E** Excluded
- R** Day of religious observance

ABSENCE CODES – UNAUTHORISED

- O** Main code for Unauthorised absence
- U** Arrival late – after registers have closed - after 9.00am
- G** Holiday – without permission

If you have any concerns or are not sure about which code to use, please see office