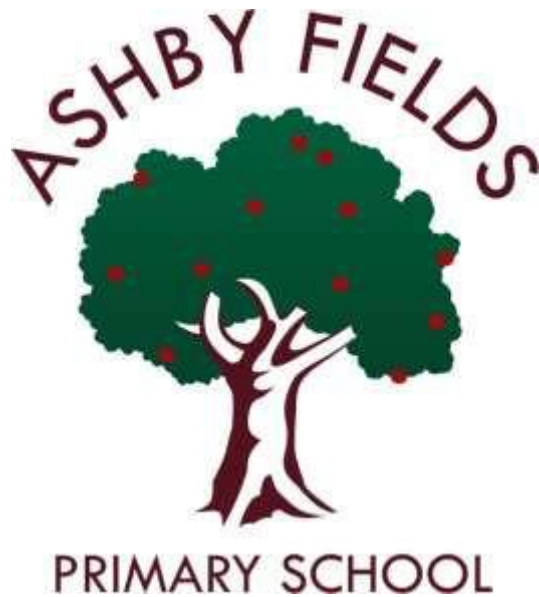




# Attendance policy



## Ashby Fields Primary School

Approved by:	Rachel Edkins	Date: 19/5/23
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Next review due by:	May 2024	

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## 1. Aims

At Ashby Fields Primary School, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are Louisa Broad and Emma Ramm. They can be contacted via the school office or email ([Louisa.Broad@AFPS.inmat.org.uk](mailto:Louisa.Broad@AFPS.inmat.org.uk) and [Emma.Ramm@AFPS.inmat.org.uk](mailto:Emma.Ramm@AFPS.inmat.org.uk)).

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leaders responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with our Family Support worker to tackle persistent absence.
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Jodie Rush and can be contacted via 01327 310068 or [Jodie.Rush@AFPS.inmat.org.uk](mailto:Jodie.Rush@AFPS.inmat.org.uk).

### 3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office each morning and afternoon via Arbor.

### 3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Family Support Worker in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and once at the start of the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The classroom doors open at 8:45am and will be locked at 8:55am.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:50 and will be kept open until 8:55. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please see Appendix 2 for a copy of our Absence Request Form which needs to be completed in advance of the appointment, preferably with a copy of the appointment details.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

## **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a home visit. If no contact is still obtained then the absence will be reported to the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during Pupil Progress Meetings termly and as part of the end of year reports.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Examples of exceptional circumstances in which absence could be **approved** include.

- Family emergencies such as a bereavement
- Specialist medical appointments
- Attendance at external examinations, i.e. music exams.
- Visits to another school as part of the transition process
- Religious observances

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office (see Appendix 2) The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school, we will undertake the following strategies to support and promote good attendance:

- Ensure our policies and procedures are clear and shared with parents/carers
- Follow up absences as outlined above.
- Work in partnership with individual families to support attendance and punctuality.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- If attendance falls between 91% and 96%, class teachers will make contact with parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns and provide informal support.
- If attendance falls below 90% by the end of the following month a letter will be sent home via the Attendance Officer outlining concerns around attendance and the actions the parent/carer needs to take to improve their child's attendance, this will include contact details and possible support available from our Family Support Worker.
- If attendance does not significantly improve by the end of the following month, a second letter will be sent home outlining concerns and requesting a meeting with our Family Support Worker, offering
- If attendance has still not significantly improved by the end of the following month, then a third letter will be sent home inviting them in for a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Should attendance still not improve by the end of the following month, parents will be invited in for a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss attendance concerns and further support available.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of once a year by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>I</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: Absence request form



### Application Form for Absence during term Time – Ashby Fields Primary School

#### Your legal responsibilities

Leave of absence should not be taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We publish the dates of school terms well ahead. This is to help you plan your holidays outside of term time. **You have a legal duty to make sure your child attends school regularly and punctually.** Schools have a duty to ensure that children attend school. The school and the local education authority monitor your child's attendance and will act if attendance is low. If your child is out of school for no valid reason, or on an unauthorised absence, we may have to refer the matter to the Local Authority's County Attendance Team who may decide to prosecute.

#### How absence is authorised

**We are not able to grant leave of absence simply because a holiday is cheaper in term-time, or more convenient workwise.** To ensure that we comply with these regulations, parents/carers requesting leave of absence will need to detail the exceptional reasons below (attach a letter if additional space is needed), in order that these can be assessed. Absence will not be granted if attendance is below **94%** for the school year. **For hospital, dental, optical or doctor appointments that cannot be made out of school hours please provide a copy of the appointment letter or card with this form.**

I request leave of absence for (student's name) ..... (class) .....  
for ..... days from ..... to ....., returning to school on .....

Or

On this date: ..... from this time: ..... returning at this time: .....

**Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

These are exceptional circumstances because .....  
.....  
.....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Please return the completed form to the school office. Or email to [Jodie.Rush@afps.inmat.org.uk](mailto:Jodie.Rush@afps.inmat.org.uk)

#### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Absences to date (days): ..... Percentage Attendance ..... %

Decision: Authorised/Unauthorised Signed: .....

Headteacher's comment: .....

## Term Time Leave of Absence

### What does the law say?

The government changed the rules on term-time absence in 2013. Under the new rules, you can only allow your child to miss school if:

- He/she is too ill to go in.
- You have advance permission from the school.
- **When will absence requests be granted?**
- Permission for absence will be only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.
- The Headteacher will consider each absence request individually and decide whether to grant the absence.
- The Headteacher will also decide how many days your child can be taken away from school if the absence is granted.

### Exceptional Circumstances

It is at the school's discretion to decide which circumstances are 'exceptional'. Examples of circumstances that are not exceptional may include:

- Cheap holidays/flights or holidays/flights that have already been paid for.
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives.
- Absence that coincides with important school events such as the start of term or exams.

As a general guideline, exceptional absence circumstances usually apply only to immediate family. Requests for leave related to extended family and friends are likely to be refused.

### What if I take my child on an unauthorised absence?

If you take your child out of school without advance permission (except where he or she is unwell), you can be fined or even prosecuted. This could involve:

- A fixed penalty notice of £60 per parent, per child within 21 days, or £129 per parent, per child within 28 days.
- A parenting order, education supervision order or school attendance order where your child repeatedly misses school without a good reason.

### Why is it important?

Missing two weeks of school for a holiday might not seem like very much, but it can have a big effect on your child's education.

For example, if your child misses two weeks of school every year, this adds up to more than two terms over the child's whole time in school.

Making sure your child attends school as much as possible means:

- Your child will have the same education and opportunities as everyone else in the class.
- You will not need to worry about catching up on work, or that your child might fall behind because of missing an important lesson.
- Your child will not miss out on activities at the start and end of term, which are often fun and a chance to develop friendships.

### Please help your child not to miss any valuable time of their education

You can find out more about the rules around term-time absence in the following GOV.UK sources:

#### School attendance and absence: overview

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013: regulation 2, [legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/regulation/2/made):

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/regulation/2/made>

### Appendix 3: Flow Chart of actions for staff reference

