

# **ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY**



**Applicable  
from September 2016**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy will be reviewed in response to changing circumstances in school and guidance and advice issued by LA and DfE

This Policy is the responsibility of the Full Governing Body, in consultation with the Headteacher.

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# ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

### ▪ Introduction

At Ashurst CE Aided Primary we believe that regular attendance is paramount to the personal, emotional and academic achievement of all pupils.

The school's Attendance & Punctuality Policy is applied rigorously, as far as is reasonably possible.

As a school, we value all pupils and families, and work in close partnership with all, especially those identified as having poor attendance, to enable any difficulties to be resolved as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The school's Attendance & Punctuality Policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000, the Equality Act and the UNICEF Convention of the Rights of the Child. Article 28 "Every Child has the right to an education."

### ▪ Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parent/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parent/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an Attendance Register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again at the start of the afternoon session.

At Ashurst, morning Registration is at 9.00am and afternoon Registration at 1.00pm.

Class Attendance Registers must record whether a pupil is:

- Present
  - Absent
  - Present at approved educational activity; or
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
  - Late
  - Dual registration
  - Excluded
  - Authorised and unauthorised holiday
  - Illness
  - Medical and dental appointments
  - Interview
  - No reason yet for absence pending information from parent/carers
  - Unauthorised
  - Approved sporting activity
  - Religious observance
  - Traveller absence
  - Forced and partial closure due to weather or other exceptional circumstances
  - INSET days
- 
- **Categorising Absence**

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

Absence can only be **authorised** by the school and cannot be **authorised** by parent/carers. All absences will be treated as **unauthorised** unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parent/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carers, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parent/carers.

**AUTHORISED ABSENCE** is categorised as follows:

- **Illness:**

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carers informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parent/carers may be asked to provide

medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. A letter from a medical professional may be requested if there are patterns of absence.

- **Medical/Dental Appointments:**

Parent/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parent/carers should show the appointment card to school. It is only in exceptional circumstances that a whole day will be authorised.

- **Other Authorised Circumstances:**

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent/carer in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

- **Excluded (No alternative provision made):**

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

- **Leave of Absence including for Family Holidays and Extended Leave:**

Parent/carers are strongly advised to avoid taking their children out of school during term time.

Parent/carers do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday.

Ashurst CE Primary School's procedure for requesting 'Leave of Absence' for **Exceptional Circumstances**:

In the first instance parent/carers requesting a 'leave of absence' for their child/ren during term time must fill in the appropriate form as a written request to the Head teacher before arrangements are made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length and purpose of the proposed leave
- Pupil's special educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request

All requests for 'leave of absence' will be responded to by the Headteacher on the returned application form.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**.

Only in '**exceptional circumstances**' will extended leave of absence of more than ten school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parent/carers will be required to justify why the holiday needs to be taken during term time.

- **Religious Observance:**

Schools acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British Society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of **authorised absence** or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to allow their child/ren not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent/carers religious body.

Parent/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

- **Traveller Absence:**

The aim for the attendance of 'Traveler' children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parent/carer from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carers is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 100 school days) in a year. This is only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parent/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

Ashurst will seek to follow current national and local guidelines when responding to the Attendance & Punctuality of Traveler children.

- **Late Arrival:**

All parents/carers, with their children, arriving after 8.55am, report immediately to School House to sign the school's 'Pupil Attendance Register'.

- **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:**

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school
- Visits to such as a circus, theatre, pantomime, show and/or museum

- **PUNCTUALITY**

- **Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on Local Authority instruction
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous **unauthorised** absence and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil.

Ashurst CE Aided Primary will follow West Sussex Council's Children's Missing Education Protocol in circumstances where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown.

- **Roles and Responsibilities**

Ashurst believes that improving school attendance is a shared responsibility which includes: staff, governors, parent/carers, pupils and the wider school community. As such

**The Governing Body will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parent/carers
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at the Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Return school attendance data as required and on time to West Sussex County Council.

**The School will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance & Punctuality Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader on attendance

- Return school attendance data as required and on time to West Sussex County Council
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through the Governing Body
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated

#### **Staff will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach to good school attendance
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Be part of the analysis of attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence as appropriate
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Help to document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

#### **Request that Parent/carers:**

- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Avoid taking 'Leave of Absence' during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written request to the Headteacher in advance of the 'Leave of Absence'.
- **Using Attendance Data**

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

**GREEN - pupils with attendance between 95% to 100%**

**Consideration be given to informing EWS of pupil attendance of 85% or under**

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

#### ▪ **Support Systems**

Schools recognise that poor attendance and punctuality may be indications of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parent/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child/ren's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Schools recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parent/carers and pupils
- Parent/carer *agreement*
- Referrals to support agencies
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both the parent/carer and pupils.

#### ▪ **10 School Sanctions**

Where schools have exhausted all avenues of intervention, Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the

regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

## **11 Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)**

Local Authority 'Fixed Penalty Notices' are considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.

For more details of 'Fixed Penalty Fines' please see the following website

[https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/learning/schools\\_ages\\_4-16/information\\_for\\_parents/attendance\\_truancy\\_and\\_exclus/school\\_attendance\\_-\\_a\\_guide\\_for\\_parents.aspx](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/learning/schools_ages_4-16/information_for_parents/attendance_truancy_and_exclus/school_attendance_-_a_guide_for_parents.aspx)

- A pupil has unauthorised absence of over 5 sessions and further unauthorised absence has occurred following a written warning to improve.

### **IN CONCLUSION**

Ashurst CE Aided Primary School works in close partnership with all families at all times and enjoys a very record of pupil attendance and punctuality.

According to their annual academic year evaluations, pupils love to come to school; and this is a tradition all associated with the school would seek to perpetuate.

The school would hope that all cases and causes for concern would be readily observed and noted; and efficiently and effectively dealt with, in consultation, from the outset.