



# Ashfield Junior School

Inspiring our children to dream big, be extraordinary  
and to change the world

## Attendance Policy

Date agreed: April 2022

Date of next review: April 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with the home-school-pupil agreement, the behaviour policy and the learning and teaching policy.

## **Initial Statement**

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential, pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Ashfield Junior School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning. Poor attendance is often a complex matter and regularly linked to the emotional wellbeing and health of a child, challenging family circumstances or safeguarding concerns.

This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality. The school aims to reduce persistent absence in order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential.

The school believes that good school attendance assists children and young people to achieve the following 5 outcomes:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

The legal requirement for attendance at school: Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. 'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable— (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Department of Education is firmly of the view that unnecessary absence is unacceptable and must be prevented and tackled by schools and expects all schools and local authorities to continue focusing Expectations.

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents/carers and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

The expectations for the school are that the school will:

- provide a safe learning environment
- ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to government legislation and guidance on a daily basis

- promote good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence
- set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality (staff) ‘
- act early to address patterns of absence
- follow up all instances of poor punctuality
- keep parents informed of their child’s attendance/punctuality record
- work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern
- the school will record attendance on SIMS
- the school will work closely with other professionals (e.g. Attendance Officer, FSW, social workers) to support parents and pupils where attendance is a concern

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child’s regular and punctual attendance.

The expectations for parents/carers are that they will:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and ready to learn
- inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child’s absence from school
- arrange holidays during school holidays only
- arrange medical appointments out of school hours wherever possible
- ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details\*

\* This is imperative for your child’s well-being and safety. School should be able to contact parents/carers or another named adult AT ALL TIMES during the school day in case of illness or injury.

The expectations for pupils are that they will:

- attend school regularly and punctually
- hand any note giving reasons for absence to their class teacher
- be ready to learn

Ashfield Junior School has a soft start to the mornings. The school gate opens at 8:30am and children should go straight to class. The gates are open at 8:30am until 8:50am.

Morning registration is taken at 8.50am. Afternoon registration is taken at 12:45pm (Years 3 and 4) and 1:00pm (Years 5 and 6).

- Registers close at 9.30am and 1.10 pm.
- Any pupil arriving after closure of the register will be marked Late with a reason why they have arrived late and the number of minutes they are late for the session
- Pupils should be called by name and respond in the prescribed formal manner – “Good morning...” “Good afternoon...” “Bonjour...”etc.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance. See absence and attendance codes.

- Any pupil arriving after 8.50am should report to the school office where office staff will register the child (on SIMS) with the reason and their school lunch option.
- There are circumstances in which a late arrival may be authorised after registers have closed e.g. bad weather, road closure etc.

### **Recording on SIMS**

When using SIMS to register pupils, teachers or HLTAs taking the register will mark with the letter 'N' if a child is absent. If a child is present they will be marked using the following code /. Staff should not be using any other codes when inputting attendance using SIMS. The office staff will input any further codes and information into SIMS regarding a pupil's absence including children who come into school late.

### **Morning**

- 8.50 am to 9.00 am = L - from 9.30 am onwards = L (Office staff record how many minutes late and any other comments provided)

### **Afternoon**

- 1.00 pm to 1.10 pm = L from - 1.10 pm onwards = L

### **Following up lateness**

Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with the parent(s)/carer(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality. Should punctuality continue to cause concern, the headteacher will contact the attendance and improvement officer (AIO) to seek further advice/support.

### **Absences**

Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school. The headteacher will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence. Absence from school may be authorised if it is for:

- sickness\*
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments (though these should be made, whenever possible, outside school hours)
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement
- examinations e.g. dance, music \* evidence of a doctor's appointment will be asked for Parents/carers may notify the school office of an absence and the reason for this, by telephone, letter or email. The notification will be stored in the pupil file for three years.

Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as:

- birthdays
- holidays in term time
- death/illness of pets
- sickness of parent/carer
- car breakdowns
- funeral of distant relatives

### **Following up absences**

The school follows up all absences from school in the following circumstances:

- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence by 9.30 am on the first day of absence, a parent/carer of the pupil will be contacted by the school secretary by telephone, text message and/or email
- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence after 3 consecutive days, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer of the pupil, by the school secretary.
- If a pupil returns to school after an absence without a written explanation from his/her parent/carer and this has still not been received within 2 days, a letter requesting this will be sent to his/her parents by the school secretary.

Parents/carers whose children have more than 4% absence from school in a period of 1 month, will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with the parent(s)/carer(s) to bring about an improvement in attendance.

Pupils whose attendance is less than 95% may have an action plan and regular reviews of attendance until they have reached their target attendance. If the pupil's attendance does not improve sufficiently; the matter will be referred to the AIO.

There is an escalation of involvement by school staff depending on the level of attendance. This may take the form of standard letters and a request to attend meetings. Where deemed necessary, other professionals may be alerted e.g. school nurse, AIO, social worker.

Pupils are supported when they return after long term absence – buddy to help with settling them back in, time with class teacher to go over essential learning, time with the school counsellor if required.

The Headteacher and Senco are responsible for making a referral to the school nurse, attendance improvement officer and the Education Support Team for Medical Absence (ESTMA) when a pupil is likely to be absent for a long time due to illness.

The school secretary is responsible for completing the EWN1 to make Attendance and Pupil Support aware that a pupil has been taken off roll.

## **Leaving and returning to school during the school day**

- An appointment card, text message or a letter should be shown to the school secretary where relevant
- Pupils should be signed out of school
- Pupils should be signed back into school on their return
- The signing in and out record will be the responsibility of the school office in the event of fire First Day Response
- Ashfield Junior School uses First Day Response for all pupils. First Day Response phone calls, texts or e-mail will be made by the school office after 9.30 am and will be triggered when parents/carers have not informed the school office by phone, letter or e-mail of the reason for absence.
- The headteacher is responsible for deciding whether to authorise absences notified through First Day Response
- The telephone and e-mail contact lists will be updated by the school office only when informed of any changes by parents/carers
- Registers will be updated with First Day Response information by the school office
- The headteacher is responsible for ensuring the quality and consistency of First Day Response calls e.g. are they challenging?

## **Term Time Holidays**

Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for family holiday or to agree to extend leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave, but will only do so in exceptional circumstances. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

There is no right to take a holiday in term time and you are strongly advised not to book holiday before discussing your exceptional circumstances with the head teacher. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and you may be fined or legal action taken against you. Any request for term time holiday to the school must be made a minimum three weeks in advance, by filling in our 'Application for Absence' form, giving full details of the exceptional reasons for the request. The school may request an appointment with parents/carers requesting family holidays in term time. The school treats all requests in the same way.

The headteacher will determine the number of school days a child may have authorised holiday. When making the decision the following factors will be considered

- purpose of the leave

- circumstances of the request
- age of the pupil
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record
- proximity to SATs
- length of the proposed leave
- pupil's ability to catch up the work
- pupil's educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil
- when the request was made.

A retrospective request for authorisation of a family holiday in term time will not be granted. Parents/carers are made aware of the school ethos regarding term time holidays via newsletters, the school prospectus and the school website.

### **Penalty Notices**

At Ashfield Junior School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in a current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the headteacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

The penalty is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect to each child. Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting. If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority.

### **Rewards**

Good attendance is rewarded individually. 100% termly and annual attendance certificates are presented in assemblies. Class attendance and punctuality are rewarded weekly in achievements assemblies and celebrated in the newsletter.

### **Integrated Working**

The school works with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available to achieve good attendance. The school will demonstrate full commitment to integrated working by:

- using the Early Help Module and working with other agencies as part of the “team around the family”
- sharing information
- taking on the role of Lead Professional where appropriate

### **Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)**

The school works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. Information to enable the AIO to carry out an effective consultation visit and/or home visit will be provided by the school office/headteacher. The headteacher meets the AIO on an agreed schedule.

The school also works closely with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO the school will make a referral to Children's Services for the AIO to work with the family on a formal basis.

### **Publication of Information**

The school shares information on individual pupil's attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff. The school will provide overall attendance information and statistics during an annual newsletter. Attendance is a standing item on the agenda of school governors' meetings. Pupils will be informed about the importance of school attendance through assemblies, presentations by visiting professionals, statistics, and displays in school.

The headteacher will be responsible for ensuring that data collected by DfE is accurate.

New parents are informed of the school's ethos on attendance and punctuality via the school prospectus, newsletters, school web site, welcome pack and transition meetings.

Staff are informed of changes to the school's Attendance Policy via newsletters, staff meetings and circulation of the revised policy.

## Appendix A

### **ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS CODE DESCRIPTION MEANING**

/ Present (AM)	Present
\ Present (PM)	Present
B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Approved Education Activity
E Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H Family holiday – Exceptional circumstances (agreed)	Authorised absence
I Illness (FOLLOWING medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J Interview	Approved Education Activity
L Late (before registers closed)	Present
M Medical/Dental appointments (Appointment cards must be shown)	Authorised absence
N No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S Study leave	Authorised absence
T Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y Partial and forced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
# School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## **APPENDIX B FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

The conditions under which leave of absence for a holiday during term time may be granted are laid down in regulation 7 of 'The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and sections 62 – 68 of the DfE's publication Keeping Pupil Registers.

Regulation 7 states that: "(3) Subject to paragraph (4), a pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him to go away on holiday where — (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and (b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application. (4) Save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil shall not in pursuance of paragraph (3) be granted more than ten school days leave of absence in any school year."

Permission is granted or not in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school. No parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a family holiday as of right. Only in 'exceptional circumstances' may the amount of leave granted exceed in total more than ten days in any school year.

The school explores with parents why such leave of absence is necessary. Each request for holiday absence is considered individually.

It is the responsibility of the headteacher and governors to decide whether or not to grant leave of absence.

When making the decision the following factors are considered:

- the amount of time requested
- age of the pupil
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record
- proximity to SATs
- length of the proposed leave
- pupil's ability to catch up the work
- pupil's educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil • circumstances of the request • purpose of the leave
- frequency of the activity, and
- when the request was made.

The procedure for requesting leave of absence is available to parents. Clear advice is included in the school's prospectus and school attendance policy.

Parents are made aware that:

- holidays in term time are not a right and will not automatically be granted
- leave will be granted only where proper procedures have been followed and permission given

- it remains the discretionary power of the Head teacher to authorise leave of absence When leave of absence has been granted the absence is recorded as authorised, using the appropriate register symbol: H – Family Holiday (agreed).

If parents take the child away without permission, or fail to apply for permission in advance of the holiday the absence should be recorded as unauthorised.

If the pupil is kept away for a period in excess of the time agreed with the school the extra time should be treated as ‘unauthorised’ absence. The appropriate register symbol in both these circumstances is: G – Family Holiday not agreed (or days in excess of agreement)

### **EXTENDED TRIPS OVERSEAS DURING TERM-TIME**

In deciding whether to grant extended leave of absence, the school considers the particular circumstances of each individual case. It is important that the school shows an understanding of the parents’ perspective whether or not they are able to authorise the request for absence. The school ensures that all parents are aware of the school’s attendance policy. When deciding whether to grant leave of absence the school considers the following:

- A visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance than the normal associations with a holiday
- Visits may be very important in terms of children’s identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child’s uninterrupted attendance at school – maintaining family links in extended family situations may involve greater significance and greater pressures in some cultures than it does currently in many western cultures
- The reasons for parents making a visit may be, for example, family illness or bereavement. It is less easy for parents to undertake these normal and necessary activities where long distances and high costs are involved
- If it is possible to include school holidays in the leave of absence in order to limit the amount of term time the pupil is absent
- The Governing Body may consult with local minority groups

If leave of absence is agreed the school will explain what work will be missed the work the pupil will miss, how it can be made up on return and how the parents could help the pupil. Parents are informed of the regulation on removal from the school roll if the child does not return on the agreed date. Parents are asked to contact the school if the return is delayed. The school ensures that they have a contact number in the UK so that they can make enquiries if the pupil does not return at the agreed time.

## **Failure to return on the agreed date**

When granting leave of absence for an extended trip overseas, the school ensures it has a date when the pupil will return to school. Regulation 8 (f) details in what circumstances pupils may be removed from roll if they do not return by the agreed date. The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 Regulation 8 (f) states that this applies - 'In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7(3), that — i. the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; ii. the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; iii. both the proprietor and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.'

## **OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES**

Occasionally, parents/carers may advise the school that they need to take their child away from school for a period of time and that they do not know the date of return. An example might be when a close relative, living at a distance from the family, is dying. The school will consider whether these absences should be regarded as 'family holidays' or as an ordinary absence from school and should always make sure they have contact details for the parents, including an address to which letters can be sent to their destination.

If they are to be regarded as an absence, not a holiday, the school will decide if the absence can be authorised. Code 'C' (Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description), is for exceptional occasions which may warrant leave of absence.

The school considers each request individually taking the following into account:

- the nature of the event for which leave is sought
- its' frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?)
- whether the parent gave advance notice and
- the pupil's overall attendance pattern

Examples might include special occasions such as attending the wedding of a close family member, close family bereavement, and prison visits.

If the absence is prolonged, the school will refer to Statutory Instrument No. 1751 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These give detailed information about when a pupil may be deleted from the Admissions Register. The school will discuss this with their Attendance Improvement Officer.

## **STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

- The school and the Local Authority actively discourage holidays during term time
- The school's Attendance Policy states that holidays during term time are not acceptable
- Parents are given a clear message at every opportunity, e.g. at parents evening, in newsletters, school brochure and bulletins, about taking holiday in term time
- Parents are informed of dates when leave of absence will not be granted, e.g. school examinations or SATs.

The school calendar is sent to parents at the start of the term so that they are aware of term times and important dates

- Parents requesting holidays may be invited into school to discuss the proposed absence and implications for their child of missing school time
- Term time holiday absence is recorded on the pupil's report
- To identify the extent of the issue and to keep a record of the amount of absence taken for holiday