



# Ashby Hastings Primary School

*"Inspiring minds to foster confidence"*

## Attendance Policy

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| Adopted by Ashby Hastings Primary School on: | Date – 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2024                |
| This policy will be reviewed                 | As policies, procedures and regulations are updated. |
| Version                                      | 4  |

For the purpose of this policy, the 'Head Teacher' refers to the Executive Head teacher, Head teacher or Head of School.

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

Ashby Hastings Primary School seeks to ensure that all their pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their full potential. For pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and punctually. Any absence causes disruption to learning and should be avoided if at all possible. Improving attendance at Ashby Hastings Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in our community – pupils, parents, governors and staff.

Regular attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

### **Senior Attendance Champion**

The Headteacher is the Senior Attendance Champion, responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school and can be contacted on 01530 442480 or [office@ashbyhastingsprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@ashbyhastingsprimary.co.uk)

### **AIMS**

- To encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance of above 97%
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To maximise attendance across the school population and reduce persistent absenteeism (below 90%).
- To work together with parents/carers in both a supportive and challenging role to achieve high levels of attendance.

|   | <b>Attendance</b>           | <b>Days Missed</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Outstanding</b>                                | Attendance is 97% or higher | 0-6 days missed    |
| <b>Good</b>                                       | Attendance is 95% or higher | 9-10 days missed   |
| <b>Requires Improvement</b>                       | Attendance is below 95%     | 10-19 days missed  |
| <b>Cause for Concern<br/>(Persistent absence)</b> | Attendance is below 90%     | 20+ days missed    |

### **PUPILS**

All pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and to arrive on time.
- Come to school properly equipped and prepared to learn.
- Talk to a member of staff if there is a problem causing them to miss school.

### **PARENTS/CARERS**

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. They should ensure that:

- Their child attends regularly and is punctual, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- They inform the school of the reason for any absence by the school online communication tool (Weduc) or by telephone to the school office by 8:50am on each morning of absence. The school will then make the decision to either authorise or unauthorised the absence. If no reason is given the absence will be automatically unauthorised.
- They know that they will not have holidays authorised during term time.
- They make medical and dental appointments outside of school time where possible.
- They give the school up to date information regarding diagnosed medical conditions which may affect attendance.
- They provide the school with up-to date contact details.

## **THE SCHOOL**

The school will:

- Strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- Build strong relationships with families.
- Establish an effective system of incentives and rewards to recognise the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise all young people who fall below the DfE threshold of 90% attendance as Persistent Absentees and will treat them as a vulnerable group of pupils who warrant support.

## **Governors**

Governors will:

- Support school to prioritise attendance.
- Work together with school leaders to establish a whole school attendance culture.
- Monitor attendance figures and hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## **Registration**

Registration is a legal requirement and creates an orderly start to the school day.

Classroom doors will open at 8:40am and the register will be taken at 8:45am. Pupils arriving after 8.55 will receive a late mark (L) and pupils arriving after 9.15 will receive a late mark (U). A 'U' mark means that that the whole morning session equates to an unauthorised absence.

If a valid explanation is received by school for the late mark, the Headteacher has the discretion to amend this to an authorised absence.

The afternoon register is taken straight after lunchtime at 13:00.

## **Authorised/Unauthorised Absence**

In the event of a pupil's unexpected absence (eg illness), the school office should be informed by 8:55am by the school online communication tool (Weduc) by completing the absence form or by phoning the office / leaving a message on 01530 442480.

The school's registers will be coded in accordance with the Department for Education mandatory codes as published in the Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance 2024.

All absences **must** be explained by a parent or carer. The school will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence.

Any unexplained absence will be unauthorised.

Absence may be authorised due to:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointment
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances

School attendance records are completed daily and stored electronically for future references. If a pupil's attendance becomes a cause for concern, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence to substantiate their reasons before the absence can be authorised.

## **Exceptional Leave**

The school recognises that there may be times when a pupil requires exceptional leave during term time for short periods of time. In these circumstances parents are asked to complete the 'Absence Request Form' to request the absence. These requests will be considered by the Headteacher on an individual basis. If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

Exceptional leave may be granted for:

- Religious observance
- Visits to prospective new schools
- External exams
- Part-time timetable

## **Holidays/Unauthorised Absence**

Ashby Hastings Primary School believes that any absence from learning disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress and should be avoided, therefore, holidays in term time will not be authorised, unless deemed by the Headteacher to be exceptional.

If a pupil meets the national threshold to issue a penalty notice, the Headteacher will consider if a penalty notice fine will be issued and refer the pupil to the Local Authority.

The national threshold is 10 sessions of absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks e.g.

- 5 or more consecutive days of term time leave (holiday), and for fewer days where this has happened before, in line with DfE Working to Improve Attendance Guidance 2024.
- 10 sessions of unauthorised non-consecutive absence in a 10-week rolling period (including holidays and lates).

Before issuing a penalty notice, the Headteacher will consider if further support would be more appropriate and will consider obligations Under the Equality Act 2010, such as where a child has a disability.

Penalty notices will be issued in line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices:

- First Penalty Notice - £160 per parent (authorising the absence) per child when paid within 28days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Second Penalty Notice (within 3 years) - £160 per parent (authorising the absence) per child when paid within 28days.
- Third Penalty Notice (within 3 years) - the third time an offense is committed, alternative action will be taken. This will often include considering prosecution or other attendance legal interventions.

See Appendix 1 – Leicestershire County Council overview.

### **Procedures for Following Up Absence/Lateness**

If a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided by 9:30am school will contact parents, as part of the safeguarding procedure. School will contact emergency contacts in order of preference on the pupil's admission form.

If absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure safeguarding. When a pupil arrives after 8:55am, parents will be asked for the reason for the late arrival.

The following steps will be followed to address attendance concerns:

1. When a pupil is identified as having low attendance, an initial letter will be sent, advising parents of the attendance concern and offer support.
2. If there is no improvement over a reasonable period of time, a second letter will be sent to parents/carers, inviting parents to make an appointment with the Headteacher to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and to discuss ways that school and home can work together to support improving attendance.
3. If there continues to be no improvement or absence intensifies, a third letter will be sent inviting parents/carers to a further meeting to discuss what further support can be offered, in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners (eg early help, school nurse). During the meeting, the consequences of persistent and severe absence will be explained, as well as the potential

need for legal intervention. It will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance.

4. Where voluntary support has not been effective, and there is no improvement in attendance, School will pass the case on to The Attendance Team at the Local Authority for formal support and possible legal intervention / penalty notice.

Ashby Hastings Primary School recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. We are mindful of individual pupils' barriers and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them to access full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the pupils' best interest, we may consider a part-time timetable.

## Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences: What you need to know about the changes.

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for unauthorised absences that occur after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

### 5 Consecutive Days of Term Time Leave.

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days, and for fewer days where this has happened before.

### 10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10-week period.

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10-week period.

### Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

#### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

#### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

(No option to pay at £80 level)

#### Third offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' court.

Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.



Please consult your school's attendance policy and speak with your school if you are thinking of taking your child out of school during term-time. It is likely you will need to make a written request to take your child out of school and any leave of absence will need to be agreed by your Headteacher before it is taken.