

Ashton West End Primary Academy

Attendance Policy



Approved by: Full Governing Board Meeting

Date: 18th October 2023

Next review due by: October 2024

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance.pdf](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent due to illness
- 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45am until 09:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:25pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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. Parents must also provide a written note confirming why their child has not been attending school.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are given information on their child's attendance once a year in a written report. Attendance reports are also provided termly to parents. If the school is concerned about a child's attendance, then parents of the child will be asked to come into school to attend a meeting to discuss this and how the school can support the child and parents in order to improve attendance. During this meeting, an Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP) will be discussed and put in place to help monitor if any improvement is made. The attendance officer will monitor the child's attendance closely and will send letters home to inform parents about the monitoring period. Should a child be placed on an AIP/monitoring period, any absence during the monitoring period would require parents to provide medical evidence.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

You are to make an application to the head teacher in writing explaining what the exceptional circumstances are with proof. (Timeframe to be provided for acceptable holiday days to authorise). Authorisation of a holiday with exceptional circumstances and proof will also consider your child's current attendance level. Holiday approval for children with poor attendance will not be authorised.

The Principal may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Unauthorised absences, such as long-term holidays will not be approved. Taking children out of school during term time for holidays will not be authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

There is no entitlement to time off during term time. If children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law, or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered, unsatisfactory absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Term-time holidays.
- Absence following or prior to a school closure or authorised leave (this will be coded as an unauthorised holiday until satisfactory medical evidence has been provided).
- Multiple/extended holidays *Section 4441 of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The issuing of a penalty notice is an alternative to issuing proceedings at court. As you have previously been issued with xx penalty notices for unauthorised holidays, you may not have this opportunity to discharge your liability again.*

Conviction of an offence under Section 4441 of the Education Act carries a fine of up to £1000

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is a child's birthday
- Parent/carer's illness (other than in an emergency)
- Frequent unsubstantiated claims of illness
- Where there is no explanation for an absence, or the school considers the reason given for the absence as unsatisfactory.
- Unauthorised absences greater than 20 days may result in a CME (Child Missing in Education) being completed leading to possible off rolling (losing their school place)

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Pupils are encouraged to attend school by receiving attendance certificates and class prizes. A prize or treat will be awarded each half term to the class who can achieve the highest percentage of attendees each week and across a half term. The class who receives 100% attendance for the week will receive a class certificate and treats. The class that receives overall highest attendance at the end of each term the class will be awarded with a class party. Children with 100% in each term and the full year will receive a certificate and medal. The school attendance target each week is 96.5%.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). They are expected to do this **everyday** that the child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. Welfare checks/home visits will be carried out should we feel them necessary. If we are unable to make contact, we may consider the involvement of other agencies eg Police, Welfare. To carry out welfare checks.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Ashton West End will write to the parents of pupils whose attendance is becoming a concern. The pupil's attendance is then monitored on a weekly basis. If the pupil's attendance improves, no further action will be taken. However, if a pupil's attendance fails to improve, the parent(s) will be invited into school for a meeting with the Principal and attendance officer to discuss the pupil's attendance and punctuality. The school can then identify what support the school can offer to help improve this.

6.1 Nursery Attendance monitoring

The attendance monitoring procedures for Nursery children differs than that of children of compulsory school age. Regarding children who attend the school Nursery, a total of 20 days unauthorised absences during the school year (September to July) will lead to the child being automatically taken off roll on the day that the 20th absence takes place. If a child is taken on holiday or a trip abroad during term time, and that absence extends to a period of ten school days or more, they will automatically be taken off roll. This includes absences which start before a school holiday and continue after the school holiday.

6.2 Appeals

If parents do not agree with a decision which is taken by the school with regard to non-attendance by their child parents should, in the first instance, write to the Principal and attach any substantiating evidence. If parents are still not satisfied with the response from the Principal they should write to the Chair of the Governing Body. The Governing Body will consider your case and let you know their decision within two weeks. The operation of the Nursery School at Ashton West End is controlled by the Governing Body of the Academy and their decision is final and cannot be appealed.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Attendance Lead and Principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 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 no later than 9am.

7.5 Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Attendance letters sent to parents should their child be placed on an attendance monitoring period.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed once every year by the Principal and Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed

B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		

G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day