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# Ashby Fields Primary School

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## *Pupil Absence Management Policy*



Reviewed on: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2019

Agreed/Approved by the Governing Board on: 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## **Introduction**

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Ashby Fields Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to work in partnership with parents to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and the policy is made available on our school website and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Matters document.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education alongside guidance from the Local Authority.

*'Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.'* Department of Education

## **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents/carers of our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance and understand their responsibility for making sure their child attends school.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

## **Definitions**

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents/carers do not have this authority, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- Absences may be authorised in exceptional circumstances

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

## **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

- An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

Examples of absences that are unauthorised include:-

- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Confusion over term dates
- Oversleeping
- Parental illness – unless it is in an emergency situation
- Family/Friends birthdays
- Shopping trips

These lists are not exhaustive and the Headteacher will consider each request on its individual circumstances.

### **Procedures**

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents/carers to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To report attendance statistics to LA and the DfE where requested.
- To refer to the Educational Entitlement Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.

### **Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality and each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance for reporting these concerns to the Headteacher.

### **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Contacting the school office before 8.45am each morning to report any sickness absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor, hospital or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

### **Registration**

The school doors open at 8.45 am.

## **Lateness**

Once the gates are closed, pupils will need to enter school via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way will be marked as late and Parents/Carers will be asked to complete the 'late arrival/late collection book'.

If they attended a medical appointment and subsequently come to school after registration, parents/carers will be asked to complete an Absence Request Form and show evidence of this appointment in the form of an appointment card.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

## **ABSENCES**

Parents/carers should leave a message on the school absence answerphone each morning of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence and the expected period that their child will be absent for.

All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for their child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

### **Parental/Carer Request for Absence from School for Holiday**

With effect from September 2013 Headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we attempt to contact you by telephone in the first instance. If we are unsuccessful in contacting you and have concerns regarding your child's absence, the Inclusion Team may be involved.

The school expects attendance of 100%. If a child's attendance drops below 96% then:

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Ongoing concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Entitlement Officer.

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason. They can give you:

- a Parenting Order
  - an Education Supervision Order
  - a School Attendance Order
  - a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')
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- If attendance falls below 90% by the end of a term, then a letter will be sent home alerting parents/carers of this and offering support to improve this from our Family Support Worker.
  - If attendance does not significantly improve by the end of the next term, then a letter will be sent home requesting a meeting with our Family Support Worker.
  - If attendance has still not significantly improved by the end of the next term, then a letter will be sent home inviting them in for a meeting with Mrs Johnson.



# Ashby Fields Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Jacqui Johnson

email: [head@ashby.northants-ecl.gov.uk](mailto:head@ashby.northants-ecl.gov.uk)

[www.ashbyfields.co.uk](http://www.ashbyfields.co.uk)

## Absence Request Form

### NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. All absence requests must be submitted by the person with parental responsibility and be the parent with whom the child normally lives. If you do not have parental responsibility and/or normally live with the child you must seek the consent of the parent who does and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider requests from that parent.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will consider:-

- The time and duration of the leave
- Your child's record of attendance
- Learning that will be missed

Authorised absences will only be granted for exceptional circumstances.

**WARNING:** If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence** and this may make you liable to a fine, charged per adult for each child.

This form must be completed before the Headteacher can consider your application for extended absence.

### TO THE HEADTEACHER

I wish to apply for

NAME[S] OF CHILD[REN] \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

to be authorised as being absent from school from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ inclusive

### **REASON FOR REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME:**

(If necessary please submit an additional letter)

Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed by the Headteacher**

**AUTHORISED** The School agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

**UNAUTHORISED** The School does not authorise your request for leave in term time due to the following reason:

**Government Legislation does not permit me to authorise this request.**

**Other reasons as detailed below:**

**If a holiday is taken without it being authorised the School is required to report the absence to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice.**

SIGNED..... Head Teacher Date .....

Code Entered on SIMs