

ASHBURY MEADOW
PRIMARY SCHOOL



PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY
POLICY

Revised by L Thomas
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ASHBURY MEADOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Ashbury Meadow Primary School views attendance as a safeguarding issue and in accordance with this Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. The school, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, acts to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. As a Rights Respecting School we respect and teach pupils article 28, every child has a right to an education.

Poor attendance and punctuality disadvantages children. We aim to ensure that the children in our school attend regularly and arrive on time. If this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance and punctuality. We work proactively with parents/carers to ensure that they understand why attendance is important and that their children have a right to it. In certain cases, this may form part of a Manchester Common Assessment Framework (MCAF) or a Parenting Contract of Attendance.

The performance indicator by which we judge the success of our efforts each year is our average attendance figure. Each year we set a target for improved attendance.

Objectives:

- For all children to be in school on time every day
- To improve school attendance and meet school attendance targets
- To encourage pupils with excellent and most improved attendance and punctuality with rewards
- To liaise with parents/carers to offer support from the school and other outside agencies

CHILDREN SHOULD COME TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY

Children should only be absent if the reason is “unavoidable”. This means illness, medical appointments or an emergency, e.g. bereavement. The school will record other situations as “Unauthorised Absences”.

IT IS THE PARENTS’/CARERS’ RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL ON THE FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes truancy, failure to explain an absence, trivial absences (such as going shopping or having a treat in school time) and arriving at school late, after registration (i.e. after 9.20am) and (1pm for EYFS and KS1 and 1.45 for KS2 pm).

All absences should be explained with a note given by a Parent/Carer to the teacher, or by a Parent/Carer informing a member of the school staff by either phone, email, written note, text to School Comms or study bugs.

Leave of Absence

Leave of absence is not a “right” and permission should always be requested and a letter to the headteacher should be written, giving dates, the number of days off and an explanation, supported by evidence. A genuine request for absence during term time will in exceptional circumstances be authorised. This letter replaces the leave of absence form. Parents will still be requested to attend a meeting with the Home School Liaison officer to discuss the absence and what actions may be taken. The school will notify the application of the decision.

Extended Leave of absence

Schools can only agree to absence for an extended period if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it.

Important Points

Requests for term time holidays: These will not be authorised in any circumstances. Previous unauthorised absences can be accrued and taken into consideration at a later date and unauthorised holidays from one year can be rolled into the next academic year.

Requests for time to travel for visa applications etc: The Home Office have stated that these should be made in advance of them running out and appointments to travel for such documentation should be made in the holidays prior to them running out. Any appointment given by an Embassy can be changed by yourselves to enable this. Therefore, they will not be authorised in term time.

Requests for time off to attend religious festivals (religious observance): Time off to celebrate a religious festival only takes place if the festival is on a school day. A one-day festival would only have one day authorised. Time to travel back to home countries to celebrate a festival will not be authorised. Festival dates are checked by school, according to the religious body involved. If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not “exclusively set aside for religious observance” by the religious body will be marked as an Unauthorised absence.

TRAVELLER ABSENCE

If the pupil is known to be dual registered and present at another school during the session in question, the attendance will be recorded using code D, however, if the pupil is known to be

absent from other provision for reasons other than traveling (e.g. illness, unexplained absence) the appropriate code will be used.

SOME CHILDREN NEED ENCOURAGEMENT TO ATTEND REGULARLY

We want our children to establish good habits of attendance right from the earliest years. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. It is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from school. Working with the school from an early stage is nearly always successful in solving problems. The school has a number of agencies who will provide support and help parents/carers experiencing problems.

If all strategies to improve a child's attendance have failed, school can use court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers and seek an education supervision order on the child.

Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents/carers if found guilty can be fined up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment receiving a Criminal record for each responsible adult.

REGISTERS

As a legal document, registers are kept on the premises at all times. Teachers are required to complete the register at the beginning of each session (morning and afternoon) every day and save them on the system by 9.10am and 12.40pm for EYFS/KS1 and 1.30pm for KS2 so that the office can run off an absent list in case of an emergency evacuation. Any child arriving after 9.20am and 1pm for EYFS/KS1 and 1.45pm for KS2 are late after registration and will go through the Main office where this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The school has a collective responsibility for encouraging good attendance and punctuality. The class teacher is initially responsible for encouraging good attendance, seeking out reasons for absence, keeping the register correctly and referring children to the HSLO if they have concerns about attendance or punctuality. The HSLO will provide induction into the procedures for new class teachers.

The HSLO has a responsibility to liaise with teachers and the headteacher and when a referral has been made, shall decide, in consultation with the headteacher and teacher, on a course of action. This may involve home visits and/or writing letters to the parents/carers. In some cases, where attendance is persistently causing concern, a contract of attendance and punctuality agreement will be put in place.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for whole school attendance and meets with the HSLO half termly to review individual pupil attendance.

PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of the Parent/Carer to contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence. If the school has not been informed of the absence then the school will telephone the Parent/Carer to obtain a reason for absence. If no contact has been made with the family, a home visit will be undertaken.

All staff have responsibility for encouraging good attendance and punctuality from the children in their care. Teachers and teaching assistants are expected to help follow up causes for absence and if a parent/carer tells them why a child is/was absent, they should record it on the sheet in the register folder. Teachers and teaching assistants should also encourage children to return unexplained absence enquiries.

Unexplained Absences: All unexplained absences will be recorded as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE until school is informed otherwise. The OFFICE will complete an absence enquiry (following the initial absence) and post it to parents/carers. It is then their responsibility to return it.

If after this time no acceptable reason for absence is given, the absence will remain recorded as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE. A total of 5 "Unauthorised absences" (i.e. 2.5 school days) within 100 school days will result in a warning letter from school then if there are further unauthorised absences a penalty notice will be issued by the One Education Core Attendance Team.

Every half term the HSLO produces an attendance report. This is reviewed by the HSLO and headteacher. Particular cohorts such as SEND and FSM are also reviewed.

If a child's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern during a half term period the HSLO will write to the Parent/Carer who will be invited into school to discuss the reasons for poor attendance. The HSLO will discuss strategies and the child's attendance will then be monitored for a further half term period. If there is still cause for concern the Parent/Carer will be invited into school for a meeting with the HSLO and an attendance contract put in place.

Children Missing in Education:

We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME) and off-rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

Alternative Provision and Procedures

The school will only place young people in alternative educational provision which is a registered provider and has been quality assured. Young people who require access to alternative provision will have a personalised learning plan designed to meet their needs. Attendance will be discussed at review meetings with the provision.

The designated person will be informed when a fixed term or permanent exclusion is being discussed and any safeguarding issues will be considered. Where it is felt that a child or young person is likely to be permanently excluded a multi-agency assessment will be instigated to ensure that there is improved understanding of the needs of the young person and their family and that the key agencies are involved.

At Ashbury Meadow Primary School staff responsible for attendance and punctuality are Kathryn Greenough (Designated person and HSLO), Amie Barratt (Designated person and HSLO) and Lucy Thomas (Designated person and headteacher)

ATTENDANCE BANDING:

95-100%– Celebrate individual achievement by half termly rewards. £1 goes into the class money box for all 100% attendees for that half term.

90-94%– Home visits made. Speak to parents/carers regarding reasons for absence and the impact on a child's learning. Will need medical evidence to authorise sickness absence. Penalty notice may begin.

Below 90%– A MCAF (Manchester Common Assessment Framework) meeting will be required. Home visits made. Medical evidence required. Meeting of professionals with parents/carers. A Penalty Notice will be issued.

Your child is now a “PERSISTENT ABSENTEE”. If there is no acceptable reason for this attendance level a case will be prepared for prosecution. Court appearance. Fine will be issued.

At the end of the academic year, the HSLO will provide a printout of your child’s attendance which will be included with their school report Parent/Carers will be informed of any new procedures for Attendance and Punctuality at the beginning of each school year.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

It is acceptable for school to ask to see appointment cards or confirm details with clinics, surgeries or the school nurse, if there is doubt about the reason given for absence.

School may challenge absences which seem excessive – for example, a whole day out of school for a dental check-up. Appointments should be made for after school where possible.

REWARDS

Attendance rewards are linked to our work with Money Sense. We understand that pupils catch illnesses and that this should not prevent a child being rewarded. We see a positive attitude as being the key to attendance and therefore 100% rewards are given for the half term, not the full year. Pupils are able to earn £1.00 for a 100% a half term, this goes into the class money box displayed on the wall in each class room. The pupils decide collectively how the money will be spent and whether to spend it termly or at the end of the year. This encourages awareness of money, it’s value and enables discussions about how to use money sensibly. It also provides an incentive for good attendance.

CHILDREN SHOULD BE IN THE SCHOOL YARD AND WALKING TO CLASS AT 8.45AM. “TO BEAT THE BELL”

ANY CHILD ARRIVING LATE IS MISSING A VITAL INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY AND OFTEN FEELS LEFT OUT AS A RESULT.

This policy links to the equality policy, SEND policy and Rights respecting policy.