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ASHBROOK INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL Attendance Policy

This policy has been impact assessed in the light of all other school policies, including the Disability Equality Scheme.

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Introduction

At Ashbrook Infant and Nursery School we place great importance on high attendance for children. We believe that an effective attendance policy will contribute to the general welfare of the children and help them to meet the challenging targets for achievement set by the school and so, their life outcomes.

Although the Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance issues, all members of the school community will work together to promote excellent attendance.

Aim

Our aim is for all children to have 96% attendance over the academic year and to maintain this excellent attendance.

Attendance policy into practice

1. Attendance registers are marked according to national and local guidelines each morning and afternoon at the start of the session via RM Integris. If an electronic register cannot be taken, a paper version is taken.
2. Parents are requested to inform school about any absence on the first morning **by telephone** before 8.30am. The message is recorded and transmitted to the relevant teacher/s.
3. If a parent has failed to contact the school on the first day of absence, the school office will contact the parent, or other family member if it has not been possible to telephone the parent. Should this be unsuccessful, an email and Dojo will be sent to parents so that the absence can be explained.
4. The school business officer and the head teacher monitor absence throughout the year, looking for regular patterns of absence, unauthorised absence and long-term absence. Particular attention is paid to vulnerable groups of children e.g. disadvantaged children and those 'looked after'.
5. Where attendance falls below 95% the head teacher may contact parents to discuss reasons for absence, or to invite them to a meeting.
6. Where attendance falls below 90% parents/carers may be invited to an Attendance Panel Meeting with the head teacher, where targets will be set and support offered. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken. A referral to the Inclusion Services Team may also be made.

Responsibilities

The Head Teacher

- Has overall responsibility for attendance issues
- Ensures that electronic system is updated
- Monitors attendance
- Keeps teachers, parents and governors informed about attendance issues

Class Teacher

- Is responsible for completing the register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions to meet legal requirements and comply with fire regulations. Children should be entered as present, absent or late. Absences should be marked as authorised or unauthorised (see definitions below). If it is unclear whether an absence should be authorised, the head teacher should make the decision.
- Monitors attendance on a day-to-day basis and inform head teacher of any concerns.

School Business Officer

- Enters data into MIS system (RM Integris)
- Monitors absence, liaising with Headteacher
- Follows up unexplained absences on first day
- Records late arrivals after register has closed (after 9.10 a.m.)

Parents/Carers

- Have a statutory duty to ensure regular attendance and punctuality.
- Inform school on the first day of absence by 8.30am.
- If applying to take a holiday in term time, fill in a holiday request form at least two weeks in advance.
- Keep school informed of any health, social or emotional issues that may affect their child's well-being and attendance.

Governors

- To oversee and monitor the operation and effectiveness of the policy.

Main Categories of Authorised Absence

- Sickness
- Medical or dental appointments, by necessity made in school time – proof of appointment may be requested, e.g. letter from hospital/doctor, text message appointment confirmation
- Domestic circumstances that could include death of a close relative, house fire or other traumatic event.
- Annual holiday in term time – if granted for exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised Absence

- Truancy-where the child is away from school without permission from an authorised person. A parent is not an authorised person and the school may refuse to authorise absences (for example, shopping expeditions, birthday treats etc).
- Late after the register has closed. This will be ten minutes after the register has closed which will be classed as a half-day absence.
- Annual holiday in term time – no exceptional circumstances.

Attendance Strategies

- The importance of good attendance will be discussed at the meeting for new parents.
- The website and Dojo will be used to remind parents about the school policy and the rules about holidays in term time.

- Prompt investigation of any issues that may be affecting a child's well-being and attendance.

Holidays

The Department for Education expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences, including persistent absence. This is because we know that missing out on lessons leaves children/young people vulnerable to falling behind. Children/young people with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary schools.

As a school we work hard to support all children/young people and their families so as to ensure that all children/young people have good attendance.

The Government made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force on **1st September 2013**. These state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases, it is the headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

As a consequence of these changes, approval will not be given to requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with beginning or end of term

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances*** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged. Absences may not be granted retrospectively.

This is Government policy and parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on the child's record and may be monitored for further action by the School Attendance Service. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.

*Examples of **exceptional circumstances** as agreed by Ashbrook Infant and Nursery School School's governors.

- Accredited Exam – ballet/music (extra-curricular)
- Gifted & Talented opportunity (part in the pantomime, Wimbledon ball person etc)
- Bereavement
- Serious family crisis
- Wedding – close family relative (parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt/uncle)
- Religious Day
- County or higher-level sporting events
- Other exceptional circumstances to be considered on an individual basis

Using Attendance Data

Children's attendance will be monitored and data will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a Child's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every term, the school business officer or administrator, working with the headteacher, will review attendance data for the previous term for each child.

Overall class attendance will be recorded on our fortnightly newsletter using the colour codes:

GREEN	classes with attendance between 100% and 96%
AMBER	classes with attendance between 95.9% and 90%
RED	classes with attendance below 89.9%

Parents will also be sent a letter every term (6) providing information on their child's attendance, if the child's attendance is below 95.9%.

This child level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Ashbrook Infant and Nursery School will share attendance data with the Department for Education as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support Systems

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parent should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

School also recognises that some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those children with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee children and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and child
- Attendance panels

- Parenting contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time attendance
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support - Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with parents.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school, in consultation with the Education Welfare Service, will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Reporting

Levels of authorised and unauthorised attendance are published by the DFE.

Safeguarding

Any attendance issues which may be related to safeguarding and child protection issues will be followed up in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

Related Policies

Safeguarding and
Child Protection
SEND
Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities & Inclusion

Appendix 1

Escalation of Attendance Interventions

GREEN – children with attendance between 100% – 96%

The class with the highest attendance will be congratulated within the Friday celebration assembly each week and attendance outcomes for each class in main school will be included in the fortnightly newsletter.

AMBER – children with attendance between 95.9% - 90%

Parents will receive a letter informing them of their child's attendance. On return to school after any absences, the class teacher will speak to the parent/child to:

- Confirm with the parent/pupil the reason for absence
- Update the child on work they have missed and support any catch up required
- Continue to monitor especially if any attendance was unauthorised

RED – children with attendance below 89.9%

Parents will receive a letter informing them of their child's attendance. The headteacher will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all interventions and outcomes.

Action may include:

- Arranging Multi-Agency working
- Maintaining close communication with parents whenever possible
- Monitoring any Parent Agreement or Parent Attendance Order with DCC
- Referring parents for prosecution and preparation of all necessary data for court case
- Referral to DCC Children Missing in Education Team

Attendance below 80%

Parents will receive a letter informing them: Children who have attendance below 80% are considered to be persistently absent from school. To ensure that intervention is focused and meets the needs of individuals, children may be grouped in to one of the following categories:

- Looked After Children and Children on the Child Protection Register
- Special Educational Needs
- Long term non attendance
- Parental support/needs e.g. parental drug use, young carers, domestic issues
- English as an Additional Language
- Ethnic minority