




Ashford Oaks Primary School

Oak Tree Road, Ashford, TN23 4QR

Attendance Policy September 2024

Document history: Reviewed: C Parkins Helen Thayer Jane Marshall & Esther Granger Jane Marshall Jane Marshall & Esther Granger Jane Marshall Emma Betts	May 2017 May 2018 July 2019 July 2021 June 2022 July 2023 September 2024
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Signed: Rob Cooke  Chair of Governors	

At Ashford Oaks, improving attendance is everyone's business. The Governors and Staff know that coming to school every day and arriving on time is an important part of a child's learning. As a Rights Respecting School we understand Article 28 Right to Education and Article 29 Goals of Education supports the Rights of the Child under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to have access to an education.

- All children of statutory primary school age (5-11) are to attend school 100%.
- The Governing body will ensure that it stays up-to-date with current government legislation.
- The Governing body will ensure that the attendance target setting procedures comply with the regulations.
- The school's target is 100%.
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time.

1. Overview

- To encourage all children to attend school all day, everyday.
- Support families where attendance is poor.
- Promote the need to arrive at school on time.

2. We will achieve this by

- Providing an attendance leaflet to all families explaining our expectations.
- Using a reward system and assemblies to celebrate good attendance and punctuality.
- Encouraging family participation for good attendance by providing family prizes for 100% attendance.
- Encouraging a whole school approach whereby whole classes and teachers are involved in supporting attendance. Incentives given as well weekly and termly.
- Providing attendance details on all progress reports.
- Contacting parents when no reason for absence is received on the 1st day.
- Carry out home visits.
- Updating the School's System (Arbor) on a daily basis recording absences and late arrivals, with reasons in accordance with the LA Absence Codes (as detailed page 3).
- Encouraging parents to bring their child in on time.
- Holding a weekly review of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Inviting parents to meet with an attendance panel when concerns are raised.
- Having random attendance/punctuality raffle.
- Agreeing an attendance action plan with children where attendance and punctuality is poor.

3. When a child's attendance and/or punctuality is poor

- Where a child's attendance or punctuality is poor :-
 1. We will issue a letter and/or contact the parents/guardians to request improvement and provide support as required.
 2. School will issue a Notice to Improve as a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage in support in improving their child's attendance/punctuality before a Penalty Notice is issued. Kent schools will issue a notice to improve for parentally-condoned absence and unauthorised absence. It will not be necessary to issue a notice to improve for term time holidays or leave of absence.
 3. If no improvement results we will apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued in the following circumstances:
 - (i) Where a child has at least 10 or more half day sessions (5 days) without authorisation during a period of 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling (10 week period) – these do not have to be consecutive.
 - (ii) Persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions after the register is closed during a period of 100 possible school sessions – these do not have to be consecutive.
 4. In addition if they are identified as vulnerable and/or within our Special Resource Provision we will arrange with the parents/carers to consider a staggered start or family support where deemed necessary.
- Where there is clear evidence of underlying problems in a family that requires more intensive support, a referral to the Front Door Service requesting Early Help Support will be made, with parental consent.
- Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) or severe persistent unauthorised absence (50% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.
- Regular reports are provided for discussion at Core Senior Leadership Team (CSLT) meetings and at Governors meetings. This will include any exclusions and penalty notices. Children are not identified at Governor meetings so as not to prejudice any appeal.
- Using data gathered by Arbor to track attendance across the school and where improvements are needed. This will ensure that resources are used with the pupils who need it most.
- **Daily statistics are shared with the Department for Education (DfE).**

4. Attendance Absence Codes

- / Present am
- \ Present pm

B	Educated off site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorized circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code / description)
D	Dual Registration (attending other site)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
F	Agreed extended family holiday
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late before the register is closed
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
V	Educational visit
W	Work Experience
#	School closed to staff and pupils
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on role
-	All should attend no mark recorded

5. Absences Procedures

Your child should always attend school regularly during the term time. There are only two real exceptions to this:

- When your child is too ill to go to school
- When the school has authorised your child to be absent
(We will consider absences for special circumstances such as attending a family wedding/funeral, death/terminal illness, prison visit, health appointment or religious circumstances.)

The following are some of the reasons, but not an exhaustive list, of absences which the School will **not** agree to (unauthorised):-

- Holidays of any length
- Where examinations and assessments will be missed
- The start of term
- Day trips, shopping, jobs at home

- Birthdays
- Not having a school uniform
- Truancy
- Keeping another child at home due to the illness of a parent or sibling
- Persistent non-specific illness (e.g. poorly/unwell)
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day (without good reason)
- Head lice and other minor complaints

Having considered the above if a parent wishes to take a child out of school they must complete an absence request at the first possible opportunity via the school office, stating the reason for the request.

The Headteacher is the only person who may authorise absences. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. Parents will be notified of the outcome of their request.

If an absence is not *authorised* (agreed) it will be recorded as *unauthorised* (not agreed).

6. Illness

- The school requires parent/guardians to telephone/text/email at the beginning of the day (1st day) to provide details of the absence and when the child is expected to return to school.
- If more than one day, parents/guardians should keep in touch each day unless the school has advised the parent they may leave it longer. Evidence of absence will be required after 3 consecutive days of absence. Continued absence without evidence will be marked as unauthorised and may result in the issue of a penalty notice. Evidence may also be required where a child is regularly absent for 1 or 2 days or has poor attendance.
- If an absence is not reported to the school and the school has called/text the parent/guardian with no response (same day), the absence is 'unauthorised'. The school will make every effort to obtain a reason on the same day as it is recognised that a child could have left home and not arrived at school.
- If the school cannot make contact after 3 consecutive days (sooner if the child is considered vulnerable or under a child protection plan) we complete a home check.

7. Medical or dental appointments

Parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible parents should request an absence pupil pass at the first possible opportunity. Parents will be asked to show the school any letters or appointment cards supporting the appointment. For an emergency appointment the school should be informed by telephone and the appointment card brought in after they return to school.

All efforts should be made to ensure that siblings attend school as normal.

8. Late arrivals

The school recognises that children who arrive late can often be stressed, which takes them longer to settle and learn. It also disrupts the class. Parents will be encouraged to bring their children to school on time every day. Where necessary, families will be encouraged to organise their morning preparations so their child can arrive on time. Parents should aim to arrive at school at 8.40am. when the gates open. Breakfast club is available at a small charge from 7.30am – 8.40am.

A child is considered to be late if they are not seated and ready to learn by 8.50am and will be marked late if they arrive after 8.50am. A child arriving between 8.50am to 9.15am is late before the register is closed. A child arriving after 9.15am onwards is late after the register is closed and is *unauthorised* unless for a pre-agreed reason.

All 'late' children will be recorded in the late book. A penalty notice may be issued to each parent of a child who arrives late after the register has closed at 9.15am for more than 10 sessions.

Please refer to the Child Protection Policy for 'Child Missing in Education' criteria/procedure.

9. Reduced Timetables (Working together to improve school attendance DfE guidance May 2023)

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. Exceptional circumstances include:

- There's a specific need for a pupil- eg medical condition
- It's in the pupils best interests
- It's on a temporary basis
- A family bereavement
- A pupil joining the school has significant needs and it is being used for transition

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised. All applications for reduced timetables are made to KCC.

10. Penalty Notices

- Penalty notices (fines) can be instigated by the school when a child is frequently late or has unauthorised absence. The parent will be given written prior notification that this action has been taken.
- Penalty notices can be issued to **each parent of each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of 28 day period may result in prosecution by the attendance Service.
- **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 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 within a 3 year period the amount will be; £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- **Third Offence** and any further offences (within 3 years) Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave and irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'
- Non-payment of a Penalty Notice may result in prosecution under the provisions Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or prosecution under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- If a child has more than 10 unauthorised absences (O) or 10 unauthorised lates (U) during a period of 100 possible school sessions – these do not have to be consecutive. A penalty application will be issued for each parent.

Please contact our Attendance Officer for day to day or more detailed support on attendance:

Emma Betts: Email: emma.betts@ashfordoaks.kemt.sch.uk T: 01233 631259

The name and contact details of the Attendance Senior Leader are:

Jane Marshall: Email: jane.marshall@ashfordoaks.kent.sch.uk T: 01233 631259

Our Attendance Policy aims to account for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts and consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. A

whole school approach will allow all staff to be on board. Our policy has considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

We will work with families to maintain good attendance and only use the full terms of this policy where absolutely necessary and where all other interventions have not succeeded in obtaining an improvement to a child's attendance.