

Ashmole Primary School



Attendance Policy

Updated on:	Changes made / notes:
October 2016	Request for leave during term time information updated. Request for leave form added.

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Written by: Adam Hickman

Introduction

At Ashmole Primary School, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. Although we highlight those children whose attendance is very good, we also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. Through whole school initiatives such as certificates and rewards for high attendance, which are shared with parents in the weekly newsletter, we promote and encourage a positive attitude and understanding of the importance of maximising attendance and punctuality.

The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Electronic registers are entered into the school's SIMS Database.

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, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

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

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

For prolonged period of absence due to illness, the school may require a medical certificate before authorising such absences.

If a Child is Absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which informs the school office, who will endeavour to contact a parent or carer before 10am. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

Telephone logs, absence/ medical notes will be recorded on the Pupil's Individual Attendance Log.

Requests for Leave of Absence

The default position of the school is that requests for absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence.

Absence during term time for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

The request form is available from the school office and is included at the end of this policy.

Absences due to Sickness

If your child is not in school for a period of time due to sickness we need to record this correctly in the school register. If the school receives formal notification of sickness, the non-attendance at school will be authorised. If the school does not receive formal notification of any sickness, the sickness will not be authorised. For periods of sickness we require the following from parents/carers:

1 to 4 days – phone call to the school on the first day,

5 + days – letter from GP signed and dated with reasons for absence

Taking Children Out of School in Term Time

The default position of the school is that requests for absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence. Absence during term time for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Penalty Notices

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, which came into effect on 1st September 2007, set out the framework for the operation of the penalty notice scheme in respect of unauthorised absence from school and the whereabouts of excluded pupils in the first 5 days of an exclusion. The Regulations require each LA to draw up a local Code of Conduct which sets out measures to ensure consistency in the issuing of penalty notices.

The LA is responsible for the overall administration of the scheme and it is for them to make such arrangements for the operation of the scheme (not provided for in the government guidance or associated Regulations) as it sees fit, in consultation with its partners.

The authorised officers for the purpose of these arrangements shall be the LA officers within the Exclusions, Reintegration, Attendance & Admissions (ERAA) Service), Police Officers and Community Police Support Officers.

Specifically, a Penalty Notice (PN) may be issued as an early alternative to prosecution or other forms of intervention as follows depending on the individual circumstances:

- where a pupil has at least 10 days unauthorised absence during any given continuous 3 month period (school time only) and the parent(s) are not co-operating with the LA and/or school to resolve the problem;
- where the parent has received a formal warning of the possibility of a PN being issued and given a minimum of 15 school days to effect an improvement.
- where a pupil is required to attend alternative education provision at a named site, school or pupil referral unit and fails to attend on or after the first day.

In addition, in the following exceptional circumstances, a PN may be issued without formal written notification to the parent depending on the individual circumstances:

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- where a parent has taken the pupil on holiday during term-time without the school's authorisation or (in cases where the school has authorised absence for a holiday) has failed to return the pupil to school on the date agreed with the school; or
- where a pupil and parent(s) have been stopped by a truancy sweep, the parent(s) cannot provide an acceptable reason for absence and the parent is known to have condoned absence previously;
- where a child is excluded from school and is seen in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion;

(Consideration will be given to whether there is reasonable justification for the pupil to be in a public place. This will depend on individual circumstances but it is recognised that there may be some circumstances where it is necessary for a child to be in a public place during school hours on a day when they are excluded.)

Justifiable reasons could be:

- The child having a pre-arranged medical appointment
- A medical emergency which requires immediate attention
- A pressing need for the parents to seek medical help and may feel it inappropriate to leave their child alone at home and unable to make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child.

Long-term Absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Attendance Toolkit

Ashmole Primary School follows Lambeth's Attendance Intervention Model (AIM). It is a tool for both schools and Education Welfare Officers (EWO's) to identify the actions needed when pupils are at risk of reaching Persistent Absence (PA) or who have already reached PA. The AIM is intended to reduce PA following a timeline based upon the fast track prosecution method where evidence is gathered over a maximum of a 6 month period.

The AIM timeline indicates the minimum level of intervention and support required according to the number of sessions absent. At each stage of the AIM process the actions are recorded for their use at a later stage if the case progresses to court for prosecution or to a Vulnerable Pupils Monitoring Group. The AIM provides interventions and actions which are robust, transparent and consistent and allow key stakeholders the ability to track casework and quality assure the process. In short the AIM delivers a clear process within a strategy to tackle the number of children and young people becoming PA. The AIM is suitable in every school setting and delivers timely, holistic and robust support mechanisms to engage key stakeholders in the process of improving attendance.

Appendix A illustrates this model.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

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The school office will be responsible for monitoring attendance and for following up absences in the appropriate way. The Head of School, SENDCo and/or Deputy Head, will oversee attendance monitoring, ensuring that the Attendance Toolkit is consistently being implemented.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. The rates of attendance will be reported in the Headteacher's termly report to the governing body, and in the annual governors' report.



Request for leave during term time

For the attention of the Head of School

The default position of the school is that requests for absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence. Absence during term time for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Name of child/ren Year/s

Date/s of leave commencing Returning to school

Total number of days absent from school

Please give reason/s for request for leave during term time

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.....
.....

Signed by parent/carer Date

For School Use

Number of days leave approved

Number of days leave NOT approved

Comment
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Signed Position Date