



“Enabling life in all its fullness”

“I came that you may have life, life in all its fullness” (John10:10)

Our **Core Christian values** for our school are: *Perseverance, Creativity, Trust and Friendship.*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for attendance at Ashton Keynes C of E Primary School.

Updated: December 2024
Review Date: December 2027

Overall Policy Statement

“Children can only take full advantage of their education if they attend school regularly and punctually.”

Rationale

At Ashton Keynes C of E Primary School, we understand that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. School is the foundation for preparing children and young people for life as adults.

At Ashton Keynes, we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually. Parents and the school community share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

We support the Department for Education (DfE) and Local Authority (LA) guidance on School Attendance and the role of the Education Welfare Service (1998). The Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a key function in working closely with schools, families, and other agencies to promote excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality.

This policy represents our commitment to support pupils to achieve 100% attendance. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies to improve attendance and rewards and benefits of good attendance can be found in this policy. The sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Aims

At Ashton Keynes, we believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school, parents and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations of what is required to secure excellent attendance for pupils at our school.

At Ashton Keynes C of E School, we will:

- Provide regular information about attendance through regular communications through newsletters and our website
- Include attendance information in mid-year and annual reports about your child's performance in school and how any absence may be affecting their attainment
- Update parents and carers with any DFE updates on attendance
- Work with you and your child to achieve maximum attendance

At Ashton Keynes C of E School, we expect:

- Pupils to arrive at school every day on time, ready to learn
- Parents to work with the school to ensure that their child attends regularly
- Holidays to be taken out of term time
- School and families to work together to ensure children attend fully to maximise their learning time and progress

Attendance: The Legal Framework – roles and responsibilities

The law says that ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). For most parents, this means registering their child at a school. Permitting absence from school that is not authorized by the school creates an offense in law and parents/carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance at school may be issued with a Penalty Notice or referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for prosecution in the magistrates' court. To avoid this happening, we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance to ensure full-time attendance. Authorised absences are those that have been agreed by the headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those where no valid reason has been provided for absence or those absences which the headteacher has not agreed.

Partnership Working – roles and responsibilities

Do you know these facts about absence and attendance?

Research suggests that a pupil who misses 17 days of school a year will drop 1 GCSE grade in attainment. (DfE).

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks in a school year

90% equates to a day off every two weeks in a school year

85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks in a school year

80% equates to one whole day off every week in a school year

A secondary age pupil whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school

“Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education.” The National Audit Office.

At Ashton Keynes C of E Primary School, attendance is the business of everyone in our school community. The governors and all staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review school procedures and strategies to support this.

We expect that parents and carers will work with us if school absence becomes a concern. Parents and carers can help to promote positive attendance by:

- Ensuring children arrive at school on time, before registers close, appropriately dressed and in a ‘condition to learn’ (i.e. not too tired or too hungry) and with the right equipment for the day
- Working in partnership with us to help their child(ren) gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Working in partnership with us to take an active interest in their child’s education
- Working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child’s attendance

The Deputy Headteacher is the school's attendance champion who, with the support of the Headteacher, has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. There is a nominated governor with oversight of attendance who works closely with the school and provides robust support and challenge to school leaders.

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- Working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child’s attendance

We will work with other schools in the area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings, to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

Procedures

At Ashton Keynes, our school attendance target is 97%. This means that we are expecting each pupil to have 100% attendance. Pupils who miss just 3 days of school in a school year will contribute to the school not achieving the attendance target set by the governing board. Legally the school register must be taken twice a day.

At Ashton Keynes, the register is taken at 8.55am (morning registration time) and once during the afternoon session at 1.15pm. The registers will remain open for 10 minutes. Pupils arriving before registers close will be

marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken.

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:

- A pupil's attendance falls below 90% or if previously had lower attendance it falls below 95%
- A pupil has more than 3 weeks where they haven't achieved full attendance in a term (In Wiltshire there are 6 terms in an academic year)
- A pupil has more than 4 recorded lates in a term
- A pupil has a regular pattern of absence

Parents are asked to:

- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first and subsequent days of absence. Parents should contact the school office before the start of the school day. Please phone (the absence line/school office/ member of staff on 01285 861436)
- Keep the school informed, in cases of ongoing absence. A note from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always remain with the school.
- Arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours unless there is urgent need for an appointment.
- Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and the expected time of arrival.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance. The process for requesting leave of absence is explained further in this policy and is in line with the DFE policy 2024 which now issues fines after 5 half days absence (10 sessions) in a 10-week period.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable, and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents
- Birthdays
- Cost saving excursions or holidays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell unless not doing so will breach current guidance and legislation from the government or Public Health England Policy name: Attendance Policy Page 5 of 8 Version: November 2024
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the Head Teacher (death in close family/ funeral, wedding of immediate family for example)
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration)
- Truancy

We will contact the parent/carer if a child is absent and the parent/carer has not advised that the child will not be in school. Parents can expect contact on every occasion of an un-notified absence. The attendance administration staff will initially phone parents within 30 minutes of registers closing. If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers then we will contact nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff or another agency e.g. PCSO to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and establish the reason for absence from school.

After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child. If a pupil has accepted a place at school and fails to attend on the agreed date, we follow up the absence

to ensure that any safeguarding and missing from education concerns are addressed. Where a pupil is open to social care, we will notify the pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences and if the pupil's name is to be deleted from the register. Where a pupil is open to the Youth Offending Service, we will report any unexplained absence to the allocated YOS case worker. Unauthorised absence from school can result in action being taken under the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

Collecting your child from school

We ask that all parents/carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3.15pm. If parents are unable to collect their child as usual then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school. We will not release children in these circumstances to anyone who we have not been advised of. If children remain uncollected from school the protocol is to contact the parents followed by the emergency contacts held on file.

Monitoring attendance

Weekly monitoring of the registers will be made by the Senior Attendance Champion and/or the attendance officer, to analyse overall absence for each pupil and identify pupils with low attendance, a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), Severe Absence (SA) patterns and levels of broken weeks, lateness, authorised absence and unauthorised absence and reasons for absence.

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year and as a severe absentee if they miss more than 50% of schooling for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA and SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a pupil by creating gaps in his or her learning. The Senior Attendance Champion, together with attendance administration staff will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially we will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an attendance meeting with a member of school staff where we can discuss the barriers to attendance and provide help and support to address that. We may ask parents to agree to an Attendance Contract which details how we will work together to improve attendance. However, if absence continues and the support we have offered is not working we may make a referral to the Local Authority for additional intervention.

Requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

In accordance with Department for Education statutory guidance, leave of absence from school may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Absence for the purpose of a holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance. Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested. Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested. We require at least 4 weeks' notice unless the absence is related to an emergency. We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised. Requests will be considered by the headteacher in line with the DFE policy and LA expectations and parents and carers will be advised if their request is agreed.

Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school or if the absence is immediately before or after a designated school holiday period. Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.

Consequences of persistent and severe absence

At Ashton Keynes C of E Primary School, we will always work with you to address any attendance concerns. If we have been unable to resolve the issue, despite a number of interventions, then we may have to refer you to the local authority where possible actions include:

- 1) The National Framework for Penalty Notices

The Department for Education has issued a national framework and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which govern how and when penalty notices may be used.

All local authorities and schools must work within the new framework.

This means that whenever a pupil accrues 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period, a school must consider whether a penalty notice should be issued. The unauthorised absence can relate to unexplained absence, absence that the school has not agreed to including for a holiday in term time or a pupil being late after the register closes.

Where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks that is NOT related to a holiday in term time we may issue you with a Notice to Improve. This will provide you with an opportunity to engage with support to improve your child's attendance. If support is not working then we will refer the matter to the local authority who may decide to issue a penalty notice to you.

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period, as a result of a holiday taken in term time, the absence will be notified to the local authority who may issue a penalty notice without further warning.

Each parent can receive a penalty notice for each child that has unauthorised absence. For example, 2 parents with 2 children who take a holiday in term time can expect to receive 4 penalty notices.

The new framework allows for parents to receive a maximum of 2 penalty notices for each of their children in a 3-year period.

The first penalty notice issued in respect of an individual child will be in the sum of £160 to be paid within 2 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued in respect of the same child within 3 years shall be in the sum of £160.

If the national threshold is met on a third or subsequent occasion in 3 years then the local authority may present the matter to the magistrates' court.

or

2) The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or even imprisonment.

or

3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Strategies for improving and maintaining good attendance

At Ashton Keynes we take every opportunity to promote excellent attendance for all pupils. If children are absent from school they miss out on learning, exciting visits trips and daily opportunities for rewards and success and they are therefore at a disadvantage. We ensure our curriculum and personal development offer is so engaging that children benefit from attending school daily.

We are a caring school community where the needs of all pupils are carefully considered.

Ashton Keynes C of E Primary School provides and promotes a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that pupils feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

If there are specific issues which might impact on your child's attendance it is important that you talk to us so that we can support you and your child. You can speak to Mrs. Saville, Mr. Hockaday or your child's class teacher.

There may be times when we ask other agencies to become involved to help us understand and work with you to encourage regular school attendance. (e.g. Wiltshire Council, school health, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service, Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service). If we feel that this would be helpful we will discuss with you first.

We are very keen to listen to the views of children and parents with regard to attendance matters and we welcome any feedback which helps us to shape how we work with families to address attendance issues and reward excellent attendance.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The attendance policy will be reviewed every 3 years by governors and school staff to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school community. We will ensure that the policy reflects current DfE and Local Authority guidance so that parents may be assured of the standards that we strive to achieve.

Communicating the contents of the Attendance Policy

This attendance policy is readily available for parents to view on the school website. School attendance also features under attendance in school newsletters and we will advise parents of any changes to policy and procedures.

This policy is in line with the DfE attendance expectations set out in 2024.

Website:

A clear explanation about attendance and support for attendance can be found on our school website here:

[Attendance](#)

Appendices

- A. Exceptional circumstance form to apply for time take a child out of school during school time and explanation letter
- B. Attendance/Absence codes for registers

This policy is based on the LA assessment of what constitutes good practice. In providing its advice, the LA consulted with the DfE and considered the relevant Education Act amendments.

Further advice about:

- The use of legal action
- Grounds for deleting a child from the school admission register
- Registered pupils who “disappear” or may be at risk

is available from the Education Welfare Service.

Appendix A
Leave for exceptional circumstances

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to remind you of the law relating to holidays / leave of absence in term time. Please see our attendance policy on our website www.akps.ork.uk for more information.

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96%+ - An excellent level of attendance. This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

94 -95% - A good level of attendance but there is scope to make it better.

85 – 93% - Absence might now be affecting attainment and progress at school.

Below 85% - Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. The school will work with you and the Local Authority to improve your child's attendance.

Holidays during term time - the law

Details from the Department for Education are as follows:

Term Time leave of absence:

1. ***Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, except in exceptional circumstances.***
2. *Only in exceptional circumstances, if leave is granted the Headteacher must determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.*
3. The application must be made to the Headteacher well in advance of the leave by a parent/carer the child normally lives with.

Applications should be made as far in advance of the leave as possible and **you should speak to the school before you book your leave.**

STOP/ PAUSE/THINK

About the effect Leave of Absence in term time has on your child

- Any Term-time absence **clearly has an impact on any child's education** which can be critical in some year groups and especially at certain times of the year.
- Leave in term time is not a right and will not normally be granted. Holiday Prices, and the fact that parents/carers have booked a holiday before checking with school, are not accepted as special reasons.
- Holidays/Absences in term time are extremely disruptive for both pupils and teaching staff.
- Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively

Make every minute count

Attending school every day = 100% attendance.

Attending 4 ½ days a week = 90% attendance = 4 weeks missed per year

Attending 4 days a week = 80% attendance = more than half a term missed per year or 2 full years missed over the course of their school career.

Attending 3 ½ days each week = 70% attendance = more than a quarter of the school year missed.
An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school

Lateness

Being late for school reduces learning time. If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year. If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss 2 weeks of learning each year. Late arrival disrupts your child's learning and that of others. Please be reminded that lateness is recorded in the office signing-in book once the gates are closed and registers close after 15 minutes at 9.10am so if your child is late beyond 15 minutes (after 9.10am), they will be marked with an unauthorised absence unless a valid reason is given.

Rewards- The school will be issuing attendance merits 3 times per year in December, March and July at the end of each term for 100% attendance to encourage children to take a pride in their attendance.

The school thanks you for your cooperation and understanding.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence

The law states you could be issued with a penalty notice if your child is absent from school without permission. Penalty notices can be issued by:

- Local Councils
- Headteachers
- The Police

Every adult who is legally responsible for ensuring their child or children attend school will have to pay a separate penalty notice. For example, in cases where two parents are legally responsible for their child's school attendance, EACH PARENT will receive a separate penalty notice for EACH CHILD.

- When paid within 21 days of receiving the letter £80 per parent per child
- When paid between 21 and 28 days of receiving the letter £160 per parent per child

So, if **two** children go on an ***unauthorised leave of absence for 10 sessions or more***, then **each parent** will have to pay £160 each. If it is paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent per child. If you fail to pay a penalty fine within 42 days you can be prosecuted.

Therefore, if a leave of absence request is not authorised you are advised not to take your child out of school. The Governors and staff of Ashton Keynes School will fully support the Headteacher's decision in the consideration process.

More information about this is available at the following website.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Yours sincerely

S.L.Saville
Headteacher

M.Bromelow
Chair of Governors

ASHTON KEYNES C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL
Leave for Exceptional Circumstances Application Form

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at school. Leave in term time can disrupt the educational progress and interrupt continuity of teaching and learning. If you wish to ask the Head teacher to authorise leave for exceptional circumstances please complete this form. Requests will only be authorised where there is evidence of exceptional circumstances.

If you remove your child from school without approval, their absence will be documented as unauthorised and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Name of Child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for the following reason/s:	
From: _____ to: _____	
Number of days my child will be absent from school:	
This cannot be taken during the school holidays because:	
Evidence of exceptional circumstances:	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES/NO	
If YES, please give details:	
I also have children attending (name of other school/s):	
Signed: Printed:	Date:
To be completed by Head Teacher & returned to parent	
Child's attendance (%) and number of missed sessions in the current academic year:	
Child's attendance (%) and number of missed sessions in the last academic year:	
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:	
Approved	The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved	The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Explanatory notes:	

Signed: Head Teacher	Date:

Attendance / Absence codes for registers

ASHTON KEYNES C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL Codes for Registers

Code /\: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that it is more appropriate

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

The national absence codes must be used. Schools cannot add to the list of codes or use their own local codes. In order to be useful to schools in helping them identify patterns of absence, it is essential that there is consistency of use by staff within each school.

- C Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances (not holiday) (*e.g. bereavement, maternity leave*)
- C1 Participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
- C2 Absence when a pupil is subject to a part-time timetable
- E Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)**
- J1 Interview (with a prospective employer or another educational establishment)**
- M Medical / Dental appointments**
- R Religious observance**
- S Study leave**
- T Parent travelling for occupational purposes

APPROVED EDUCATION ACTIVITY

- K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority**
- B Educated off site (*NOT dual registration and not for a pupil participating in remote learning.*)
- D Dual registration (*i.e. pupil attending another establishment*)
- P Approved sporting activity (*arranged by school*)
- V Educational visit or trip (*arranged by school*)
- W Work experience (Yr. 10 and Yr. 11)

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- G Holiday not granted by the school
- N Reason for absence not yet established**
- O Absent in other/unknown circumstances**
- U Arrived in school after registration closed

UNABLE TO ATTEND DUE TO UNAVOIDABLE CAUSE

- Q Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements (local authority duty)
- Y1 Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5 Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

ADMINISTRATIVE CODES

- X Pupil not of compulsory school age not required to be in school
- Z Prospective pupil not on the admission register (to set up registers in advance of pupils joining school)
- # Planned or partial school closure (e.g. school holidays, teacher training, school used as polling station, staggered starts for different year groups)