At Ashfield Valley we care for and value every child in a nurturing, inclusive environment.

All members of our school community will work hard to ensure that every pupil achieves their full potential and has the opportunity to shine.

Attendance Policy

Ashfield Valley Primary School Attendance Policy

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- To promote a positive image of the school as a place where achievement for all begins with a commitment to regular and punctual attendance by all.
- To develop strategies aimed at improving and maximising attendance encouraging children to want to attend school every day.
- To promote understanding amongst parents and the wider school community of the importance of good and punctual attendance in raising achievement.
- To define clear and consistent procedures for all staff in the recording, monitoring and follow-up of pupil absences, whilst ensuring that parents and pupils understand the important roles they play in these procedures.
- To reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- To follow a clear procedure for the management of extended absences abroad.
- To safeguard children ensuring that unexplained absences are followed up and a record is kept and the LA is notified of children who do not return to school.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board
The governing board is responsible for:
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure that school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- The role of the Link Governor for attendance is outlined in this document

The Headteacher
The headteacher is responsible for:
- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:
- Leading and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs A Begum, Deputy Headteacher.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance accurately for both morning and afternoon sessions daily, using the correct codes as directed by the school (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school MIS system on the same day in a timely manner.

School office staff

School office staff will:
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record in the school diary and pass any information to SLT

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:
- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence (and then every other day), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:
- Attend school every day, on time

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (after lunch). It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:
- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:
- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the absence
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm.
- Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.30am – not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins. The afternoon register will be taken within 30 minutes of the session starting.
- A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked with a U code, unless other reasons are provided.

Absence
- Parents and Carers should contact school on the first day of absence by 9am to give the reason.
- If there is no contact with school on the first day, school will call families and/or make a home visit.
- The absence will be treated as unauthorised if there is no explanation from home.
- The first two days of sickness absence will be authorised if a reason is given.
- Medical evidence will be asked for from day 3, otherwise the absence becomes unauthorised.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker or external agency working with the child.

Punctuality
- Nursery morning session starts at 8.30 and the afternoon session at 11:45.
- Children in Reception to Year 6 should arrive between 8.45 and 9 am when the doors will close.
- Children arriving after 9 am will need to enter through the main entrance and will receive a late mark. Children arriving after 9.30 will be given a U code.
- Children who arrive after 9.30 am will receive an unauthorised absence.
- Persistent late arrivals will be followed up by school initially and then by school's Education Welfare Officer.

Appointments
- Appointments should be made out of school hours and/or during school holidays where possible.
- For appointments during the school day, an appointment card should be shown at the office. Children should return to school as soon as possible after the appointment.

Holidays during term time
- Holidays during term time, including extended absences abroad are not permitted.
- Families who go abroad, or on holiday, during term time will receive a fixed penalty notice and, children may lose their school place.
- Families who go abroad or leave the school without notifying the school will be classed as Children Missing in Education (CME). If these children cannot be traced, they will be referred to the Local Authority following CME procedures.

Reporting to parents
The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels through updates each term at parent' evenings and through the written report.

Sanctions
Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice.

The **first time** a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days. The amount is reduced to £80 per parent, per child if the fine is paid within 21 days.

If parents/carers take a child, or children out of school for a **second time** a penalty notice will be issued for £160 per parent, per child and paid within 28 days. There is no reduction for prompt payment.

If parents/carers are issued with a penalty notice a **third time** for either term time leave or unauthorised absence the case will be presented directly to the Magistrates' Court and a fine of up to £2,500 can be issued. (Appendix 2: Rochdale Penalty Notice Framework)

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

- The school operates a computerised attendance system. This allows regular interrogation of data and the generation of useful reports for following up any attendance issues.
- The governors of Ashfield Valley Primary School monitor the school's progress towards the attendance targets and the strategies and procedures that are in place to

promote excellent attendance. Regular reports on attendance are made to the governing body by the headteacher.

- A breakfast club encourages children to come early to eat a good healthy breakfast and engage in activities that encourage positive social skills.
- The importance of regular attendance is regularly discussed with children and parents in assemblies, parents' evenings and through day to day contact.
- Intake meetings for Nursery and Reception are held annually where attendance policy and procedures are explained and parents' responsibilities are clarified. This is followed up by annual Year Group Welcome Meetings.
- New admission meetings also cover the importance of regular attendance and information is shared with new families arriving at Ashfield Valley Primary.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

- The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.
- Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.
- The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.
- Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.
- The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the local governing committee.
- School operates an attendance tracker which closely monitors children's attendance and punctuality. If a child is identified as a cause for concern, then the school will hold attendance clinics with the parents.
- Regular communications sent out to parents about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Lateness is addressed by speaking to a parent when they drop off a child at school.

Analysing attendance

- The school will:
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the local governing committee and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary