**Ashleigh Primary School: Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

**Statement of Intent**

At Ashleigh Primary School, our motto is: "**Together we Learn, Grow and Achieve**". This vision is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to creating an inclusive culture where every child is known and valued.

Ashleigh Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive their entitlement to a full-time education in order for each pupil to achieve their true potential. We recognise that poor attendance can result in lower attainment and can impact on the personal, social, and emotional development of pupils. Therefore, we strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment in which each member of the school community feels wanted and safe. Staff at Ashleigh Primary School will work alongside family members, and their children, to ensure that pupils at our school want to come to school every day and on time.

**1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through:

* Developing a whole school culture and ethos with regard to promoting good attendance and punctuality.
* Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
* Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
* Acting early to address patterns of absence.
* Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

**2. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the *'Working together to improve school attendance'* guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance, including The Education Act 1996 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

**3. Roles and Responsibilities**

**3.1 The Governing Board** The governing board is responsible for promoting the importance of school attendance, ensuring school leaders fulfil their statutory duties, regularly reviewing attendance data, and holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

**3.2 The Headteacher** The Headteacher, Mr. I. Matthews, is responsible for the implementation of this policy, monitoring school-level absence data, supporting staff, and issuing fixed-penalty notices where necessary.

**3.3 The Designated Senior Leader for Attendance** The designated senior leader, Mr. M. Harty (Deputy Headteacher), is responsible for leading attendance across the school, devising strategies to address poor attendance, and meeting with parents to discuss attendance issues.

**3.4 The SENCO & Pupil Wellbeing Mentor** The **SEN Coordinator (SENCO), Miss N. Youd**, and the **Pupil Wellbeing Mentor, Mrs. K. Donnelly**, support the senior leadership team by monitoring attendance data for vulnerable pupils and working with families to overcome barriers to attendance.

**3.5 Class Teachers -** Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, promoting good attendance, and reporting any patterns or concerns to the designated senior leader.

**3.6 School Office Staff** - The **School Business Manager, Mrs J. Campbell**, and **Admin Officer, Miss N. Clark**, will take calls from parents about absence, record it on the school system, and make first-day response calls for any unexplained absences.

**3.7 Parents/Carers** - Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child attends every day and on time, call the school to report an absence before **8:55 am** on the first day, provide the school with emergency contact numbers, and make medical or dental appointments outside of the school day where possible.

**3.8 Pupils -** Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and on time, ready to learn.

**4. Recording Attendance**

**4.1 Attendance Register** We will keep an attendance register, and every entry will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. The register for the morning session is taken at **8:55 am** and for the afternoon session at **1:00 pm**.

The register closes at **9:15 am** in the morning and **1:15 pm** in the afternoon.

**4.2 Unplanned Absence** Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by **8:55 am**. Absence due to illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. In such cases, the school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor’s note or prescription, but will not ask for this unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified.

**4.3 Planned Absence** Medical or dental appointments will be authorised if the school is notified in advance. However, pupils should be out of school for the minimum time necessary and must be signed out and back in at the school office (Inventory system)

**4.4 Lateness and Punctuality** A pupil arriving after **8:55 am** will be marked as late. Pupils arriving after the register closes at **9:15 am** will be marked as an unauthorised late, which is an unauthorised absence for the session.

**4.5 Following Up Unexplained Absence** Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will call parents/carers on the morning of the first day. If we cannot reach any of the pupil’s emergency contacts, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If unexplained absence continues, the school will consider a home visit. Where the school cannot establish the child's whereabouts, a welfare check may be requested from the police. All concerns are recorded on our **CPOMS** system.

**4.6 Children Missing from Education (CME)** The school is required to inform the local authority about any child who has been absent without permission for 10 continuous school days, has failed to return for 10 days after an agreed leave period, or is believed to have moved out of the area with no confirmed new school. In such cases, the school will make all reasonable enquiries, including home visits and contacting all named people on the child’s record, before making a CME notification.

**5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

**5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence** The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence during term time in **'exceptional circumstances'**. Any request should be submitted on the school's request form, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. Valid reasons for authorised absence may include:

* **Illness and medical/dental appointments**.
* **Religious observance** where the day is exclusively set apart for this by the parent's religious body.
* **Traveller pupils** travelling for occupational purposes, where this has been agreed with the school in advance.

**5.2 Legal Sanctions** The school or local authority can issue a **Penalty Notice** (fine) to parents for a child's unauthorised absence.

* The fine is **£80 per parent per child** if paid within 21 days, rising to **£160** if paid within 28 days.
* The threshold for a penalty notice is **10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence** within a 10-school-week period. This can include term-time holidays and persistent late arrivals after the register has closed.
* If fines are not paid, the local authority can prosecute the parents, which could lead to a fine of up to £1,000.
* **Education Supervision Order (ESO):** For cases of persistent poor attendance where voluntary support has not succeeded, the local authority may apply to the Family Court for an ESO. This places the pupil under the supervision of the local authority, and parents must comply with directions given to ensure their child's attendance at school.

**6. Attendance Monitoring and Intervention**

**6.1 Monitoring and Analysis** The school will monitor attendance data weekly at a class and school level, and half-termly at an individual pupil level. We will analyse this data to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support and develop strategies to address any patterns of absence. Persistent absence is defined as a pupil missing 10% or more of school, and severe absence as 50% or more.

**6.2 Intervention Escalation Plan** Please see **Appendix 2** for the school's detailed attendance escalation plan. The plan outlines the triggers and strategies used at each stage of concern, from universal support to referral for parental responsibility measures.

**6.3 15 Day Alerts** In line with DfE guidance, the school will notify the local authority when a pupil has missed 15 days of school (continuously or cumulatively) due to illness. This is to ensure that pupils with health needs receive the right support to continue their education.

**7. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body. It will be updated as required to reflect any changes in legislation or guidance.

**8. Links with Other Policies**

This policy links to the following Ashleigh Primary School policies:

* Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2025
* Behaviour Policy
* Marking Policy 2024
* Staff Code of Conduct Policy - July 2025
* Whistle Blowing Policy 2025

**Appendix 1: DfE Attendance Codes**

| Code | Description |
| --- | --- |
| / or \ | Present in school |
| L | Late arrival before register closed |
| C | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance |
| M | Medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity |
| V | Educational visit or trip |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school (unauthorised) |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances (unauthorised) |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed (unauthorised) |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established |
| X | Not required to be in school (e.g. non-compulsory school age) |
| # | Planned whole school closure |

**Appendix 2: Ashleigh Primary School Attendance Escalation Intervention**

| Stage | Thresholds / Triggers | Strategies and Actions |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage One: Universal Support** | Attendance at **96% or above**. | * Regular communication on the importance of attendance via newsletters. * Weekly attendance awards in **'Shine Assembly'**. * Termly and end-of-year 100% attendance awards. * First day of absence phone calls. |
| **Stage Two: Initial Support** | Attendance drops below **95%**.  Pattern of late arrivals. | • In addition to Stage One support:  • A **first warning letter** is issued. Parents invited to discuss any concerns.  • A **late letter** is issued if punctuality is a concern. |
| **Stage Three: Targeted Support** | Attendance drops below **92%**.  Continued late arrivals.  Unexplained or unauthorised absences continue. | In addition to previous support:  • A **second warning letter** is issued.  • Parents requested to attend a meeting with a senior leader  • An **individual attendance plan** is created to offer support. |
| **Stage Four: Enhanced Support** | Attendance drops below **90%** (Persistently Absent). <br> Strategies at stage three have not improved attendance. | In addition to previous support:  • A **third warning letter** is issued.  • A formal meeting with the **Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher** is held to discuss a **Parenting Contract**.  • **Medical evidence** will be required for any further illness-related absences. |
| **Stage Five: Parental Responsibility Measures** | Parenting contract has been breached and attendance has not improved. <br> Any of the thresholds for legal action have been met. | In addition to previous support:  • The school will refer the case to the **Local Authority**.  • The Local Authority will utilise appropriate legal powers to enforce attendance (e.g., Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order, or prosecution). |