

ATTENDANCE POLICY

(PASTORAL CARE)

ASHGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL



"Learning, Caring, Growing Stronger Together."



Article 28

Every Child has the right to an education

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a top priority

PASTORAL CARE

Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
2024	2028	Mr R Smith & Mrs J Carberry

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Article 28- Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free.

Article 29 - Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Article 42 - Governments should make the Convention known to children and adults.

Article 6 - Governments must do all they can to make sure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. Ashgrove Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued, safe and secure.

The Pastoral care of our children is central to the aims, ethos and teaching programmes in Ashgrove Primary. We are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children, staff and other members of our school community. Our Attendance Policy is part of our collective Pastoral & Care Safeguarding policies.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools

[Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By Schools – Circular 2023/11 | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202311-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools)

SCHOOL ROUTINES

In Ashgrove Primary we wish every child to have a positive and orderly start to their school day. Maintaining excellent attendance and coming to school on time helps to ensure routines are well established and our pupils can make good progress. To ensure the above we have a clear set of school routines which we expect all parents and pupils to follow:

- Pupils may enter the school from 8.40 am- at this time members of staff are on duty and can ensure appropriate supervision.
- The school day starts at 8.55 am- we expect all children to be in class at this time.
- Any child arriving to school after 8.55 am is late.
- A child arriving to school after 8.55 am will need to come to the main school entrance. Parents are welcome to escort their child to the Reception area. The Secretary will give the child access to the school building.
- Pupils who are late to school are expected to walk by themselves to their classroom.

PRINCIPLES OF ATTENDANCE POLICY

We believe that high levels of attendance are directly linked to pupil attainment and fulfilling potential. Excellent attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children and the smooth running of our school. Ashgrove Primary will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems which prevent this are identified and addressed quickly. It is the parents

responsibility to ensure their child arrives to school and returns home safely. Ashgrove Primary is not responsible for supervising children to and from school.

Children who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their peers and friends, to underachieve in examinations and or become involved in anti-social behaviours.

AIMS

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Ashgrove Primary School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

OUR EXPECTATIONS...

- ✓ All pupils will attend school every day
- ✓ Pupils will attend school punctually
- ✓ Our pupils will attend school prepared for the day (e.g. Homework complete, PE Kit, Reading Books, Healthy Break etc)

ROLE OF PARENTS, CARERS AND GUARDIANS

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence.

How to report an Absence:

1. On the first day of non attendance, complete the online absence report form which can be found on our website or by clicking the link below: <https://forms.gle/6ov1ixhUHdKypfwr8>
2. Follow this up with a brief written note to the class teacher on return to school for all days missed.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.55am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive support. Additional information and sources of further support for parents can be accessed on the links below:

[Give your child a helping hand | nidirect](#)

[School attendance and absence | nidirect](#)

ROLE OF ASHGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance. The Pastoral Care Leader has responsibility for monitoring attendance, staff should bring concern regarding attendance to her attention (Mrs Jill Careberry).

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures – attendance is included as a standing item in the Principal’s report to governors.

Teaching staff regularly monitor attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

Ashgrove Primary School will:

- ✓ Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- ✓ Provide a safe and structured learning environment
- ✓ Keep regular and accurate attendance and punctuality records and monitor each individual child’s attendance and punctuality
- ✓ Promote good attendance and punctuality and reduce absence through a system of reward and recognition
- ✓ Regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all pupils
- ✓ Promote attendance and punctuality and reduce absence through a system of reward and recognition
- ✓ Where appropriate, inform parents/carers via school letters regarding their child’s/children’s poor attendance and punctuality- refer to appendix
- ✓ Act to address patterns of absence
- ✓ Ensure that every pupil has access to education to which they are entitled
- ✓ Endeavour to keep in contact with a parent where there is a prolonged absence

PROMOTING AND CELEBRATING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- ✓ Monthly Class Attendance- each month the class with the highest % attendance is recognised and rewarded- certificates are presented in Assembly
- ✓ Monthly Most Improved Class Attendance
- ✓ Monthly Individual Attendance- each month any child achieving 100% attendance will receive a House Point
- ✓ At the end of the academic year 100% Attendance Certificated will be presented at our Prize Distribution

NOTIFYING ABSENCES

From time to time children may need to be absent from school for other reasons such as medical appointments. Such absences usually **only take up part of the school day**. School should be informed of such absences in writing in advance by emailing school, and children should be brought in to school for morning registration and back to school after the appointment.

Every effort, however, should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Every day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

100% Attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
95-99% Attendance	See above for details	Very Good- Good
95% Attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning lost	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning	Unacceptable

The Table shows the DENI Guidance, School Attendance Matters- A Parent’s Guide

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance. Refer to appendices.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Unexplained absences i.e. an absence which has not been explained to the school
- Shopping
- Looking after other children
- Birthdays
- Day trips or holidays during term time
- Truancy

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as unauthorised absences. Under current guidance from DENI Ashgrove Primary may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore our school will only authorise holidays in line with this guidance. Exceptional circumstances will only be granted very rarely.

Parents/carers should inform the school via letter if they are going on holiday. Although we can not authorise this absence we appreciate the courtesy.

School will not provide written work or activities when a child is withdrawn from school for a holiday during term time. A folder of missed work may be available on return, although the child will have missed the explanation and input from the teacher.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

The school will continually monitor the attendance of all pupils. In Ashgrove Primary we follow a two stage process to support pupils who are persistently absent:

STAGE 1

Each half term (or more often if required) the Pastoral Care Leader will review all absence and the reasons given for those children who fall below 85% as a cumulative percentage since the beginning of the academic year. Trends in absenteeism is looked for, such as improving or declining attendance from the previous month or if there are certain days of the week where individuals are absent more often. Following this analysis a range of actions may result:

1. School may phone parents to discuss the matter and offer support with a view of attendance increasing; AND/OR
2. School will write to parents informing them that pupil attendance is of concern and this will be monitored in the weeks ahead (refer to appendices).
3. School will discuss attendance concerns with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer). *

Very often interventions at this early stage can have a positive impact on pupil attendance and no further action is required.

STAGE 2

1. Following from the first stage if no improvement is evident the list of children whose attendance which is below 85% is discussed with the Education Welfare Officer and a referral will be discussed or agreed.
2. The Pastoral Care Leader will liaise with the class teacher, SENCO and other professionals if the need for support is identified.

* School may make a referral to the EWS (Education Welfare Service) as an early intervention before or at stage One. Parents/carers will be informed by the school when a referral to this service is made.

PUNCTUALITY, REGISTERS AND LATENESS

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness to school causes disruption to individual learning and to that of other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive to school on time.

Registers are taken by teachers at the start of the school day. Teachers must record the attendance of each child in their class on SIMS. Teachers should complete the register by 9.30am.

The following registration codes may be used:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
Λ	Present: / (AM) \ (PM)	Present
A*	Artistic Endeavour	Authorised Absence
B*	Bereavement	Authorised Absence
C	Suspended	Authorised Absence
D	No reason provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
F*	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G*	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H*	Other Absence	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	Authorised Absence
J*	Extended Leave	Attendance not required
L*	Late (before registration closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason provided yet for absence (temporary code)	Unauthorised Absence
O*	Other exceptional circumstances	Authorised Absence
P*	Approved Activity/including learning remotely from home	Approved Educational Activity
R*	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S*	Study Leave	Approved Educational Activity

U*	Late (after registration closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V*	Educational Visit/Examination	Approved Educational Activity
W*	Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	Only Staff should attend	Attendance not required
Y*	Exceptional Closure	Attendance not required
#	Holiday for all	Attendance not required
!*	No attendance required	Attendance not required
1	Community Providers / EOTAS (organized by EA)	Approved Educational Activity
2	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement/hospital tuition (organised by EA)	Approved Educational Activity
3	Elective home education	Attendance not required
4	Pupil referral unit	Approved Educational Activity
5	Another mainstream school (under entitlement framework)	Approved Educational Activity
6	Training organisation (under EF)	Approved Educational Activity
7	FE College (Under EF)	Approved Educational Activity
8	Intensive Support Learning Unit / Shielding due to Covid-19	Approved Educational Activity
9	CAHMS / Mental Health Support	Approved Educational Activity

*The use of this code is at the discretion of the school

Present / Approved Educational Activity Codes

Attendance not required codes

Authorised Absences Codes

Unauthorised Absence Codes

A child who is late to school will receive an 'L' code (Late) for that day. If a child does not arrive in to school an 'N' code is used. This indicates an unauthorised absence and will be recorded as such on a child's record showing that 'no reason' has been provided for the absence.

However, in on return to school where a reason is provided the N code will then be changed e.g. I for illness. If a child arrives to school late the 'L' code will be used.

LATENESS

We understand that occasionally, in exceptional circumstances, pupils may be late to school. However, regular poor punctuality is not acceptable. A child arriving to school after the bell must enter school via the main entrance. In the case of very persistent lateness the Pastoral Care Leader will contact the parents/carers to discuss a way forward.

EARLY COLLECTIONS FROM SCHOOL

Pupils should be collected from school every day at their usual hometime (refer to table below). Only in rare circumstances should children be collected early – this should not be a pattern or established routine. Parents collecting pupils early from school must write to the class teacher informing them of the reason and time for early collection.

	P1&2	P3	P4-7
Pupils may enter the school building	8.40am	8.40am	8.40am
Start of school day (pupils arriving after this time are late)			
Home time	1.50pm	Monday & Thursday 1.50pm Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 2.50pm	2.50pm

ILLNESS GUIDELINES

(The Information has been provided by the Health Protection Agency)

Chicken Pox	5 days absence from onset of rash
Whooping Cough	5 days absence from onset of rash
Scarlet Fever	5 days absence from onset of rash
Diarrhoea/ Vomiting	Until symptoms have settled for 24 hours
Headlice	None

A child with a heavy cold should stay at home until they are well enough to return to school.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP WITH ATTENDANCE



Establish a good routine at home and stick to it

Make sure your child understands the importance of good attendance and punctuality



Get up early



Get things ready for school the night before



Make appointments e.g. dentist after school hours, at weekends or during the holidays



Show an interest in what your child is learning in school...



Let school know the reason for absence on the first day of non attendance...

Send a note to the teacher when your child returns to school



Avoid taking holiday's during term time



Discuss problems your child may have at school with their teacher - let us know about anything that is causing a concern





Education Welfare Service Referral Process



Pre-Referral Process

Preventative actions in accordance with school's attendance policy



Referral Process

Refer to EWS Referral Guidance Form

- This will have been provided to you by your link EWO



Complete Referral Form

- Referrals can only be assessed based on the information provided on the form.
- Ensure all details are included and are accurate
- Insufficient information may result in the child not receiving appropriate support

Submit Referral Form

- Form can be submitted via email or post
- Prior to submission check with your link EWO for confirmation of where to send referral

Referral Confirmation

- EWS will confirm receipt of referral
- If you haven't received confirmation within 10 days contact your link EWO
- EWS Support commences in Partnership with school



Date:

ADDRESS

Parent/Carer

NAME OF PUPIL

We hope you and everyone at home are well.

In Ashgrove, we are required to regularly monitor the levels of pupil attendance. As such, we are contacting you to ask for your help and support.

At present, xxxx overall attendance is xx% since the beginning of September. We would like to see this attendance increase in the weeks and months ahead.

We understand that occasionally children are not able to attend school due to illness or other exceptional circumstances. Where this is the case, please do keep us informed by completing an online absence notification form – this is available on our website.

If your child is absent from school on medical grounds, please send to school a copy of medical documentation – we can then update this on our attendance records.

If you feel that you need additional support to increase your child's attendance, please contact your class teacher.

We look forward to seeing xxxx attendance increase in the weeks ahead. We will make contact with you again if attendance continues to be a concern and offer you the support of the Education Welfare Officer.

Kind regards

J Carberry (Mrs)

Teacher in charge of Attendance

R Smith (Mr)

Principal