



Attendance

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Verified by	
Approved by	Safeguarding Committee



Our school is a fun, welcoming place and by encouraging children to attend school regularly and punctually, their experience of school life is enriched. We believe that if children are to succeed both in school and in later life, good habits should be instilled at a young age. Good punctuality is part of this. It is unsettling for children if they arrive late as well as causing disruption to other pupils and the class teacher.

The school community consists of parents, pupils, children and all staff and together we aim to form a partnership in taking responsibility for excellent attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and we are aware of the need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, which can be used whenever there are concerns over a particular pupil.

The government via the DCSF stipulates that children of primary school age should achieve an attendance record of 95% or more. The staff of Ashchurch Primary School aim to work with parents, children and the Education Welfare Services to help everyone to meet this target.

The Education Act of 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of this Act states:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence".

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer/child or have general concerns about the absence, to the Education Welfare Service.

Registration

All schools are required to keep an admissions register (the school roll) and an attendance register which must be marked once at the beginning of the morning session and again immediately after lunch. The school register, which is initially marked manually and is then transferred to the computer, is a legal document and is kept by the school for a minimum of three years. Pupils are recorded on the register as being present, engaged in an out of school activity but away from the school site, or absent. Children who are not in class at the time of registration are recorded as absent; an appropriate code will be added to the register when a reason for the absence has been provided.

Attendance Codes are provided by the DCSF via Gloucestershire Local Education Authority



Register Code	Explanation
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Pupil attending other institution under a formalised dual registration arrangement.
C	Other circumstances (bereavement, agreed special occasions, performances, day of deployment / day of repatriation for military families, other approved absences not covered by other codes).
D	Dual Registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended Family Holiday (for which leave has been granted).
G	Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess).
H	Family Holiday (for which leave has been granted).
I	Illness
L	Late (before register closed)
M	Medical and dental appointments, confirmed illness.
N	No reason provided
P	Approved sporting activity (participation in/attendance at).
R	Day of religious observance for the religious body to which the parents belong.
T	Traveller child travelling.
U	Late after register closed
V	Educational visit or trip (UK/overseas).

The School Day / Lateness

Children are asked to line up on the playground at 8:50 where their teacher will collect them and welcome them into the classroom. Registration takes place at 8.55 a.m. A late mark will be given after this time and up until 9.25 a.m. If a child arrives after 8.55 a.m. Parents or representatives are requested to sign in the child with a time of arrival and reason for lateness via the school office reception. If a child arrives after 9.25 a.m. an unauthorised absence mark will be given.

Parents are been advised that if they have notified us of a medical or dental appointment which results in lateness, an M mark will apply.

Lateness is monitored regularly in order to identify recurring patterns early. If appropriate, the school will write to parents/carers to inform them of our concerns. It may also be appropriate to invite parents/carers to attend a meeting in order to discuss issues affecting punctuality so that we can work together to improve the situation.

Absence from school

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Any absences should be explained ideally on the first day of absence to the school office verbally or in writing, with, if possible, the predicted date of return. It is our current practice to ring home if a child does not arrive in school and we have not been informed to establish whether the parent/carer is aware of the absence.



Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer/child or have general concerns about the absence, to the Education Welfare Service.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required either verbally or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school, details of approved reasons and registration code are included in the table below.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Education Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use the Penalty Notice proceedings which came into force on 27th February 2004. Following investigation, any unresolved issue could result in the parent(s) receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 Section 444(A). The penalty is £50 if paid within 28 days or £100 if paid within 42 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, prosecution will proceed under Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts, etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments, which occur in school time.

Holidays in term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).



The DfE have not provided any guidelines as to what they would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the headteacher and the governing body.

Families wishing to request leave for a child during term time must complete a holiday form which is available from the school office or online from the school website. This should be completed at least 2 weeks before the proposed absence.

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence is marked as unauthorised and the Education Welfare Office is notified.

Where the parents/carers keep a child away for longer than agreed, then the extra time is also marked as unauthorised.

Targets

The OFSTED expectation for above average attendance is 94.9% plus.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Ashchurch	93.82	95.3	95.5	95.8
Gloucestershire	95.14	95.8	95.5	
National	94.86	95.6	95.2	

For 2014/2015 our attendance target is **96%**.

We aim to improve attendance and punctuality throughout the school via classes, year group activities and whole school assemblies. We aim to create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm, and to demonstrate that good attendance is valued by the school.

Attendance is monitored frequently so that we can identify issues early and provide the support needed to help us achieve our target.

School Responsibilities

All staff at Ashchurch Primary School will help to create an ethos which places a high value on regular

attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example by their own behaviour. Staff will encourage good habits by:

- Ensuring that registers are marked accurately and promptly every day.
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence – a letter from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the Head Teacher can decide whether the parents' explanation justifies authorising the absence.
- Responding to absenteeism firmly and consistently with care.
- Contacting parents when the school is concerned about a pupil's absences and making a record of this.
- Consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance gives any cause for concern.
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils.

The attendance officer will go through the registers twice daily to maintain accurate records – absences, late arrivals, medical appointments will all be recorded.



If no contact has been received by school regarding the reason for a pupil's absence, the school will contact the parents. If no reason is received at all then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The attendance officer will transfer manual registers onto the computerised attendance log on a weekly basis. Parents of children with unexplained absence will receive a letter requesting a reason for non-attendance at school. If no reply is received a reminder will be sent, after which any outstanding absences will be recorded as unauthorised. Details of attendance patterns are passed on to the child's next school. If there is a pattern of concern over attendance the School Attendance Officer will contact the parents and possibly the Education Welfare Officer to discuss any problems.

Parental Responsibilities

- It is the parents' responsibility to make sure their child gets enough sleep, gets up in plenty of time to get ready and eats a good breakfast.
- Children should arrive at school ready to enter the classroom at 08.55am. Any child arriving after this time should enter the building via the front door and report to the school office as a late arrival. The child's name, class, arrival time and any reasons will be recorded.
- It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school as soon as possible in the morning if their child will not be attending school.
- Parents should ensure that their child attends school wearing the correct uniform and brings appropriate equipment or kit and provision for lunch.
- School encourages parents to help their children by showing an interest in school life.
- Parents are invited to attend all parent's evenings, listen to reading and supervise homework.
- If a child appears reluctant to attend school, parents are encouraged to contact the child's class teacher immediately to discuss any concerns. There could be a number of reasons for this reluctance such as difficulties with school work, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important to identify any reasons for a reluctance to attend school quickly and before it becomes a more serious issue.

Education Welfare Service

Each school is allocated an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will liaise with the Head Teacher, the School Attendance Officer and parents. The EWO will aim to encourage attendance, to resolve any underlying problems, to discuss appropriate strategies and incentives with all concerned parties.

The EWO has the right to inspect registers in schools on a regular basis as well as to contact parents of children who have poor attendance. The EWO can also pursue further investigations for children who have poor attendance through frequent or continual illness – usually via the school nurse or social services.

Truancy

Truancy is currently not a problem at Ashchurch Primary School. However if this is suspected the parents and the EWO will be contacted immediately. Strategies will then be developed within the school/parent partnership to ensure that the underlying issues are addressed.



Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/carers to find the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.