

## Ash Lea School Attendance Policy

### Statement of intent

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents / carers and teachers have a shared responsibility to facilitate this. Ash Lea School aims to work with parents and carers to ensure that all its pupils attend both regularly and punctually, to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

### **Good attendance is recognised as 95% or above**

The expectation from the Department for Education and Ofsted, is that as a school we strive to have an overall attendance of 95% or above, and at Ash Lea we strive to ensure our pupils exceed this, whilst recognising that some of our pupils have a high level of absences because of medical and /or therapy appointments and/or illness because of their medical conditions or Special Educational Need (SEN).

### **Monitored persistent absence is recognised as below 90%**

Most of our pupils rely on educational transport to come to school which is not always available in extreme weather conditions. We acknowledge this within our policy.

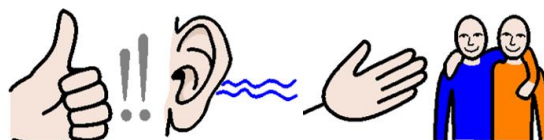
### School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.



## Responsibilities and roles

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their children.

### Parents must:

- Inform the school as soon as possible, on the first morning of absence, if their child is absent from school for any reason. This can be done by phone, email, or in person to the school office but not via the bus escort. As good practice, an explanation of the absence, by letter, email or note in the home-school diary, should also be sent in once the child returns to school.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school in time for registration (9.00 – 9.30) if, for any reason, the child arrives after this time, parents should report directly to the office (this does not, of course, apply if transport is delayed).
- Avoid booking family holidays during term-time. This is particularly important around exam times (usually May/June) for older students. Parents should make any request for absence in term time **in writing at least four weeks in advance**. The head teacher will only authorise this in exceptional circumstances, in line with national policy. If the child was still absent, this would be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

### School will

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos
- Recognise external factors which influence pupil attendance and work closely with parents and carers should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern and be as supportive as possible in improving the situation.
- Record and monitor attendance in accordance with both the statutory requirements and the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

### Pupils will

- Attend school regularly and on time.

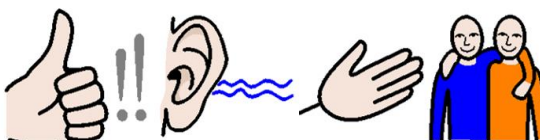
## Registration & punctuality

Registers will close at 9.30 am. Any pupil arriving after this time, without a valid reason, will be marked as late. Registers in the afternoon close at 1.30pm. There is a clearly coded system for marking of registers (see appendix A)

Any unknown reasons for absence are recorded as no reason (N) in the first instance to ensure registers can close on time. But this must be followed up as soon as possible by class teacher and admin staff. The Attendance Lead will monitor this on a weekly basis.

If a pupil is consistently late the school will:

- Contact parents to discuss the situation.
- When pupils are persistently late, contact with parents will be made and Targeted Support may be contacted.



NB: criteria for placements at college post 18 include punctuality and good attendance. School will be asked to supply records.

### Leave of Absence in Term Time

Families do not have a right to take their children out of school for the purposes of family holidays or trips abroad. Government Guidance instructs Head teachers **NOT** to authorise leave of absence in term time. Permission for this type of absence should only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances.

Requests for Leave of Absence during Term Time should be made to the Head teacher, **at least 4 weeks in advance**, using the Leave of Absence Request Form (available from the school office or on the school website). Each request will be judged on a case by case basis.

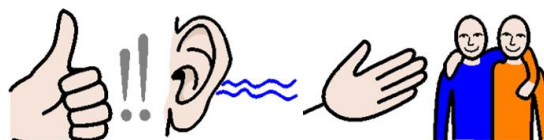
**Penalty Notices** may be issued:

- If parents have not sought permission from the Head teacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday or leave of absence in term-time;
- If the Head teacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway;
- If a pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation and the pupil remains on the roll of the school.

All pupil absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be unsatisfactory, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

**Examples of 'authorised' absence:**

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, e.g. bereavement
- School visits
- An immediate family member is critically/terminally ill
- Families who have been through a traumatic event
- Families where a parent/carer is able to demonstrate clearly (e.g. a letter from an employer which can be verified) that they are restricted to all annual leave within school term time
- Where a pupil finds busy environments challenging and parents wish to take a holiday during a quiet period (this must be exceptional)
- Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive
- A pupil attends a respite provider like Rainbows where structured activities are arranged
- Where a LAC child attends a residential with their LAC provider



- Where a child attends a planned transition visit

#### Examples of 'unauthorised' absence

- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Missed bus
- Slept late
- No uniform
- Birthdays
- Holidays not agreed in advance

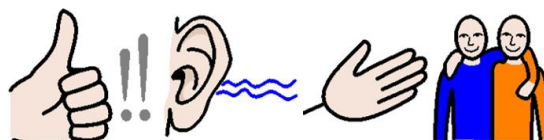
#### Response to absence / non-attendance

- Office staff will contact the parent/carer by text or email when a child is absent on the first day of absence if no explanation has been received by 10.30am.

A follow up call will be made if an explanation is still missing. These will be recorded on the attendance register (School Pod)

- If there is any cause for concern they must report this to Luke Skillington with responsibility for attendance and/or a designated safeguarding lead immediately.
- If there is no response on day 2 of absence office staff to call 1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> name on pupils card or any other emergency number. If still no response by 12.00, SLT and the attendance lead to be informed and a home visit will be considered.
- Attendance Lead (Luke Skillington) to meet with class teachers when pupil attendance begins to drop and input additional support where required.
- Parents will be informed termly if their child's attendance falls **below 85% and satisfactory explanations have not been received**. If satisfactory explanation has been received a review of attendance with parents may still be needed to assure appropriate support is given.
- Parents will be asked to a meeting if this happens regularly, to see what support can be offered. Referral to Targeted Support may be made to identify and support those students whose attendance or punctuality is deemed persistent e.g. below 85%.

The school makes exceptions for children who have long term illness or ongoing essential medical appointments.



### Collection of data

A range of attendance data will be collected and analysed in order for the school to be proactive around attendance matters.

- All registers need to be completed on time am and pm
- Missing marks should be chased up admin staff twice a day
- Any No Reason (N) marks should be chased up weekly (no longer than 5 days)
- Attendance Lead to follow up staff who continuously fail to complete the register on time
- Attendance Lead to be informed of unexplained absence by day 2 of absence
- Attendance Lead to be sent attendance figures of risk pupils/groups identified (FSM, PP, LAC, Previous persistent absentees etc)
- Half termly report to be written by Attendance Lead and risk pupils identified and follow procedures implemented.
- Termly report written for governors and a meeting with named governor arranged before full governor body to report to include statistical analysis and highlighting Pupil Premium, Looked After Children and Free School Meals pupils.
- To write an annual attendance report and identify actions for the following year.

### Reduced Timetables

Although all pupils are entitled to a full-time education, some pupils may need some flexibility due to medical, well-being or emotional regulation needs. Pupils who are not attending Ash Lea School on a full-time basis are recorded on a Reduced Timetable Agreement form. These records show the hours a pupil is in school and what they do in their off-site hours. It contains the reasoning behind the agreed flexible arrangement and a clear review date (see appendix b).

**Attendance Lead:** Luke Skillington

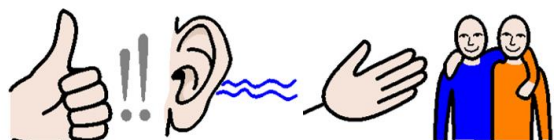
**Last Reviewed:** Jan 2024

**Next review:** Jan 2026

**Signed:** *Kate Davies*

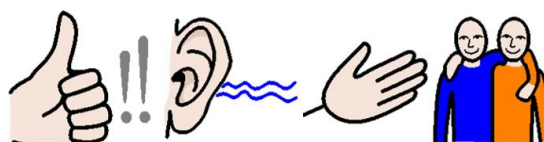
**Date:** 01/01/23

Head Teacher



### Appendix A:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present in school AM	Present
\	Present in school PM	Present
L	Late arrival	Present
C	Leave of absence granted by school	Authorised Absence
H	Leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by school	Authorised Absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
M	Medical or Dental appointment	Authorised Absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by school or in excess of the period determined by school	Unauthorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	Unauthorised Absence
O	Absent without authorisation	Unauthorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
D	Dual registered at another school	Approved Education Activity
B	Off-site Educational activity	Approved Education Activity
J	An interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment	Approved Education Activity
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not worked based training)	Approved Education Activity
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendance
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school	Not counted in possible attendance
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendance
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendance



## Appendix B:

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

#### EVERY DAY COUNTS

#### GOOD ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL = GOOD PROGRESS

Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school to take part in an annual family holiday. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

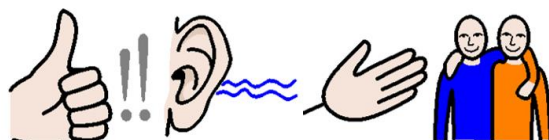
- The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. The Local Education Authority works with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and schools can refuse your request to take your child out of school.
- If you wish to take your child on holiday during term time, you must apply for permission in advance in writing using the attached form. Permission for authorised leave of absence may be granted for holidays in **exceptional** circumstances. Please note the school year is from September to July.
- The Department for Children Schools & Families state that absence for holidays in term time due to the following reasons will not be authorised:
  - availability of cheap holidays
  - availability of desired accommodation
  - poor weather experienced in the school holiday period
  - overlap with beginning or end of term
  - holidays booked before checking with the school
  - day trips

*(Keeping Pupil Registers – guidance in applying pupil registration regulations - DCSF September 2006)*

- There are certain times of the year when a child may experience extra problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence and give permission for a holiday in term time, the school will take these and other factors into account.
- If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice or a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed holiday as possible.

**Issued by Nottinghamshire Education Welfare Service October 2008**



**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

Pupil's Name ..... Tutor Group/Class .....

Home Address .....  
 .....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of Last day at School ..... Date of Return to School .....

Total number of school days missed .....

Could you please explain the circumstances that make it necessary to have time off during term time and why it should be regarded as exceptional.

.....  
 .....

Do you expect to be taking any more term time holidays this academic year?

.....

Have you already requested any term time holiday this year?

.....

*I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.*

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed .....

Date .....

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE**

**Please do not book your holiday until you know that the school will authorise your child's absence**

