

Ashford Park Primary School



Attendance Policy

Ashford Park Primary School & SURREY EDUCATION WELFARE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Schools are guided by this November 2016 Department for Education document:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance?mc_cid=2ce14554eb&mc_eid=203710edaa

The staff of Ashford Park Primary School are committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors, the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

The school staff, alongside the LA, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Our school hours are from 8.50 a.m until 3.15 p.m. Children are welcome in to their classes from 8.40 a.m. with registration at 8.50 a.m. Late will be recorded if the pupil arrives after 8.50 to 9.00 a.m. and as an unauthorised absence after 9.10 a.m. Afternoon registration will take place at 1 p.m.

Expectations

All pupils:

- are expected to be at school 100% of the term time;
- are expected to attend school punctually;
- should attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- should discuss promptly with their class teacher, any problems that deter them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their LEGAL responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence by 10 a.m. and send a note to explain the absence on their return to school;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;

- monitor every pupil's attendance and report to parents/carers every term through the Termly Record of Achievement;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain reasons authorising the absence;
- encourage good attendance (**Keeping Children Safe in Education, Children missing from education, September 2018**);
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- provide a safe learning environment;
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education welfare;
- meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention - The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

Encouraging Attendance

Ashford Park Primary School encourages 100% attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in case of a fire drill;
- by publishing and displaying attendance statistics;
- by requiring pupils to regularly record their own attendance and punctuality;
- by celebrating good and improved attendance;
- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education welfare if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note, e.mail or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact them that morning by telephone, Parent Mail or text.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. The school will inform parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. Absence and reasons will be recorded on the individual child's SIMs record.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Education Welfare Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.
- If a child is on the Child Protection register and does not attend school, their Social Worker will be contacted by 10 a.m on the first day of absence.

Persistent absence (PA)

The school works in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the Home School Link Worker (HSLW), to identify vulnerable children with a record of persistent absence. Ashford Park conducts a half termly audit of persistent absence

to inform our School Improvement Plan for Persistent Absence in liaison with the EWO and HSLW. PA children along with other identified groups are identified on the whole school tracking system, and appropriate intervention is provided where necessary and monitored against progress made by these pupils. As from September 2015, the persistent absence percentage has been decreased from 15% to 10% (90% attendance and below).

Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Ashford Park Primary school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education welfare.

Leave of absence:

The school holiday dates are published two years in advance on the Surrey CC website, and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays (approximately 13 weeks in one academic year)

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-term-dates>

All leave of absence in term time, will be unauthorised unless the Head teacher, on behalf of Governors and under exceptional circumstances, using discretionary power, may grant absence. No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right as this is not an entitlement.

The Headteacher will consider for example:

- statutory school age;
- the child's record of attendance including sick absence and lateness;
- attainment;
- absence patterns;
- contact with the school prior to absence to provide information about the exceptional circumstance;
- completion of the appropriate school paperwork;
- any other circumstances that may be considered exceptional.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 87% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Good attendance and punctuality are life skills. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Head Teacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole policy, evaluating and reviewing where appropriate;
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- provide daily attendance information through absence reports to all staff;
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with the EWS and appropriate access to attendance data;
- attend monthly Care meetings, to raise awareness of vulnerable children, including those with attendance concerns;

- consult and liaise closely with the EWS on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- to work in close collaboration with the EWS during termly/half termly register analysis;
- ongoing attendance award scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards;
- ensure that attendance percentages/graphs are displayed around the school and to set whole school attendance targets;
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWS.

Class teachers, HLTAs and LSAs:

- to complete registers accurately and punctually twice daily;
- to liaise with the office to follow up any unexplained non-attendance;
- to record all reasons for absences in the register;
- to check daily absence reports and inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance/phase leaders of concerns;
- to be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Head teacher.