



# Attendance Policy and Procedures

Approved by Management Committee

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Date: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Date approved: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Next review: Summer 2025

Legal updates may precipitate changes

Version: Final

Status: Active

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## Attendance Policy and Procedures

### OUR PRINCIPLES

Attendance and punctuality are key to progress and success and we do all we can to maximise student attendance. We handle attendance issues with particular sensitivity and understanding because all our students have health needs and our approach is to tackle and resolve quickly any problems that affect school attendance.

We cannot expect our attendance record to compare well with that of mainstream schools since our students are with us because of medical and health needs. We do not therefore set improvement targets but we underline the importance and benefits of good attendance and punctuality and our expectation that they will attend regularly and on time.

We recognise the key role that parent/carers play in securing good attendance and our approach is based on forging strong school-home links wherever we can. We adapt our strategies to individual needs to encourage students to attend and welcome and make full use of support from the Education Welfare Service where we have concerns about students.

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

### LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

➤ [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## OUR PROCEDURES

### Monitoring and tracking

As a small school our procedures for tracking and recording absences are simple:

- students sign in at reception when they arrive
- morning register is closed at 9.30 and after that students are marked as late
- the administrator checks absences against individual timetables
- Senior Leadership Team is notified of absences by 10.30am or earlier
- attendance is input to SIMS daily
- SLT scrutinise attendance weekly and an analysis is written every half term.
- attendance data is sent to Brent Local Authority in regular census exercises
- attendance data is shared daily with the Department for Education in line with new statutory guidance brought forward in 2024

### Absences

As our students have health needs and/or medical conditions all absences are considered on a case by case basis. Where there are absences that we have not been given prior notice or other causes for concern we may use one or more of these measures:

- letter to parent/carers warning of our concern
- meeting with parent/carers and student
- pre-referral meeting with Education Welfare Service
- formal referral to the Education Welfare Service
- multi-agency meeting to agree a strategy for improving attendance

### Parent/carer involvement

Parents/carers are our key ally in securing good attendance and have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly. They agree in signing our Home/College agreement to:

- respond to morning check-ins by office staff from 7:30am
- engage with link tutors if they telephone in the morning to speak with you/your child to encourage attendance
- contact us by 9.00 am if their child will be absent
- send a letter or medical certificate to explain the absence
- arrange dental or other appointments outside lesson time except for emergencies
- not take holidays with the child in term time

### Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend their session every day as shown on their timetable
- attend lessons punctually

- attend appropriately prepared for the day with correct uniform and equipment
- discuss promptly with a member of staff any problems that may affect their attendance.

### Parents/carers will:

- fulfil their legal obligation to ensure their child attends the school or tuition daily
- ensure that their child arrives punctually and prepared for the day
- ensure that they contact the service daily to report absence, or before if this is known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend
- supply written confirmation of absence with reason on request
- contact the service promptly whenever any problem occurs that may mean their child is unwilling/unable to attend
- notify the service of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify the service immediately of any changes to contact details
- where possible arrange medical appointments out of the school day

### To achieve these aims and expectations Ashley College will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere in a safe learning environment
- provide a supportive response to any pupil's or parent's/carer's concerns
- encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance, punctuality and absence.
- contact parents on the first day of absence when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the Headteacher can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- provide outreach support and deliver homework packs wherever possible
- regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of their child
- send letters home or conduct a home visit if valid reasons for absence are not supplied
- work with multi agencies, such as Education Welfare Service, Health and Social Care, regarding children who are not attending regularly
- meet regularly with the Education Welfare Service to monitor and support regular attendance and punctuality and refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance and persistent non-attendance to them
- work with Education Welfare Service to issue fixed penalty notices where this is justified
- Data is analysed weekly, half termly and termly to identify trends however due to our small pupil numbers this data is in line with our understanding of the pupils who use the service

### Definitions

- Everyday counts as two sessions (morning and afternoon)
- Every half-day absence has to be classified as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why the cause of each absence is always required.  
**Authorised** Absence
- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from the parent/carer. The Headteacher authorises the absence.

## Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher and which the school does not consider reasonable

### Penalty Notice

- Penalty notices will only be considered by Ashley College when the threshold of ten sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence (together or on separate occasions) is met within a ten school week period – this means the absences can span weeks, school terms and academic years. However, Ashley College aim to work in a supportive way to allow pupils to access their education and you will have multiple opportunities to discuss your concerns before reaching this stage.

## Examples

### Authorised absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil
- Hospital/emergency dental/emergency doctor's appointment for the pupil
- Major religious observances
- Visits to prospective new schools
- External exams or educational assessments
- Attend interviews for prospective school and Post-16 destinations

### Unauthorised absences:

- Shopping/day trip/ family day out/visit
- A birthday treat
- Oversleeping due to a late night
- Pupil looking after children or another family member
- Any medical appointments for other family members
- Holidays
- Tiredness due to extra-curricular activities
- Inability/unwillingness to participate in a school activity

Each pupil's attendance can be summarised as:

- 96% + Good – Well done! This will help all aspects of the pupil's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. This pupil's attendance is at, or above, the school target.
- 90% – Below expected – Strive to build on this. This pupil's attendance is below expected and will be monitored. A letter may be sent to parents informing of their child's attendance.
- 95% – Below expected – Strive to build on this. This pupil's attendance is below expected and will be monitored. A letter may be sent to parents informing of their child's attendance.
- 85% - Poor – Absence is now significantly affecting the pupil's attainment and progress. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. ASHLEY COLLEGE staff will meet with the pupil and their parents to plan targets for improvement.
- 90% - Poor – Absence is now significantly affecting the pupil's attainment and progress. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. ASHLEY COLLEGE staff will meet with the pupil and their parents to plan targets for improvement.
- 80% and below Unacceptable – Absence is now seriously affecting attainment and progress and disrupting the pupil's development. The pupil's attendance is now a major concern. Meetings will be held and it is probable that a referral to BSAS will be made.

- Ashley College and the Education Welfare Service work closely together and regularly monitor both attendance and punctuality. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously.
- However, each case is different and the service acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

## Improving attendance

We motivate good student attendance by ensuring that all students feel supported and valued. Link tutors play a key role in promoting good attendance for all students through daily link tutor sessions, and once a week focused student discussion. They also liaise with parents/carers on a weekly basis giving praise and feedback to encourage improved attendance. SLT also address attendance during the 6 weekly reviews and discusses next steps with parents/carers and students.

Incentives are:

- weekly certificates for students with 80% or above attendance and 80% or above punctuality
- half termly certificates: 100 % attendance Platinum, 95% - 99% Gold, 90% to 94% Silver and 80% to 89% Bronze
- half termly gift vouchers of £10 for 100% attendance and 100% punctuality and £5 for 95% attendance and 95% punctuality
- attendance percentages are measured on each pupil's agreed individual timetable
- attendance reward trip at the end of each term to motivate students to improve and make further efforts in coming to school

For students dealing with emotionally based school avoidance we have creative approaches: these have included early morning wake up calls, purchasing new alarm clocks for students, on occasions where funding allowed – taxis to collect students from home if parent/carers could not help and staff collecting students in the school minibus. Our school mentor supports students through discussion around attendance and motivation and strategies are developed to help them establish good routines. The Deputy Head supports parents/carers through the parent support group or 1:1 session.

All staff drive the message that through better attendance comes the reward of improved grades and progress. Students also develop greater resilience and anxieties are reduced.

## External support

Where our contact with students and parent/carers does not result in better attendance and we have cause for concern we refer to the Education Welfare Service whose officer visits our school regularly to support our initiatives with letters, direct contacts or meetings or with other agencies that can help. The school EWO also delivers “attendance matters” presentations to all new parents/carers, and re-visits this annually with any existing parents/carers. They are available to informally meet families and create strategies to support improving attendance.

## Home tuition arrangements

Arrangements for students taught in the home are no different in principle. Home tutors register absences for each lesson and contact the attendance officer, on the day, if a tutee fails to attend a lesson without prior arrangement. This information is input to SIMS. Persistent absences could lead to withdrawal of home tuition and a Brent Front Door or Educational Welfare Service referral.

### **Holidays during term times**

The law does not entitle parent/carers to take children on holiday during term time. Unless they are deemed exceptional and authorised in advance by the Head teacher, holidays in term time are unauthorised and may result in legal action against the parent/carer.

Pupils taken on leave without permission will be marked in the attendance register as taking unauthorised absence.

This may result in a fixed penalty notice issued by the Education Welfare Service.

### **School trips**

If a student is not able to participate or attend a school trip they are still required to attend school where alternative provision is arranged for them. Any student not attending Ashley College because a school trip is running that they do not wish to participate in will be marked as an unauthorised absence.



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		

<b>C1</b>	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		

<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays