



# ASHBOURNE HILLTOP

## Primary & Nursery School

### Attendance Policy (Joint)

#### Mission Statement

The Ashbourne Cluster of Schools aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of punctuality. We aim to ensure that all our pupils receive a full time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential.

We will strive to provide a warm, welcoming and caring environment whereby each member of the community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

We will all establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and time keeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils who give low priority to attendance and punctuality; this is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to education

#### Aims

- To improve the overall percentage and attendance rate of all pupils at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all stakeholders.
- To ensure an effective monitoring system is established; to provide support advice and guidance to parents.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To implement a system of rewards
- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare support service and with other service and agencies.

#### Rights, Responsibilities and Roles

##### School

- We will encourage good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absenteeism.
- We will work with parents in order to ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality

- The school will set an attendance target for the year. This target will be monitored monthly and 100% attendance rewards will be given during rewards assembly. Annual reports will be produced for Parents and Governors.
- Contact will be made on the first day of absence if no reason for the absence has been received from the parent.
- We will apply the policy consistently with every child, family and across the cluster of schools.

#### Pupils;

- Pupils will make sure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Children will have their attendance celebrated during a reward assembly
- Will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

#### Parents;

- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance where they are properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by phone call on the first morning of any absence.
- Parents will avoid arranging family holidays during term time.
- Parents will ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the day.
- Parents will agree to this as part of the Home School Agreement and sign this agreement.

### Actions

#### Registration

The school day begins at 9am. Doors open at 8.50am and parents have 10 minutes to bring their children into school. Doors close at 9am prompt. The register is taken. The register closes at 9.10am. Any child who arrives at school after 9am must be taken straight to the office whereby a Late mark will be placed in the register and they will be then taken to the classroom.

In the afternoon the register is taken at 1.15pm.

The register will be written in ink not pencil.

#### Procedures for Following up Absence/Lateness

Parents are advised to phone into school on the first day of their child's absence to give a reason. This reason will be detailed on the register.

Contact will be made on the first day of absence via a phone call. If the phone is not answered then a text message will be sent.

When a pupil is persistently absent or late and without good reason and the school's efforts to effect improvement have been unsuccessful it may be necessary to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) (letters are included at the end of the policy which can be used) and or the MAT team based at Etwall Children's Centre.

Follow up will be undertaken on specific individual absences which fall below 90%

The Head teacher monitors the attendance and lateness. Where there is a pattern beginning to emerge the parents are contacted by letter. If there is no improvement the Head teacher will phone the parents and arrange a meeting to discuss the situation or contact the parents by letter.

Identification of developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness will be monitored and the EWO may be contacted.

## **School Organisation**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following;

Head teacher

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To collate and analyse attendance data.
- To liaise with the MAT team/EWO

School Business Officer

- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To follow up immediately any unexplained absences by contacting parents. To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To liaise with class teachers and outside agencies.
- To ensure the late log is filled in.

Class Teacher

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform the HT of concerns in a timely manner.

Parents

- Contact with school on each day of absence.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

## **Absence review Procedures**

Attendance is reviewed on a half termly basis where pupils are identified as persistent absentees, in line with the set government criteria of 90% and the school's attendance target, are subject to further monitoring and or action due to the link between attendance and attainment. We, as a school have a duty to inform parents of their child's attendance and how this can impact upon their performance.

Long term standing medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant, doctor or photocopy of medical prescriptions) where appropriate

Leave of Absence- changes to School attendance regulations

*In September 2013 the Education (pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Head teachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.*

*Any requests should be on official school absence request forms and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made.*

*You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996*

The School will consider factors such as;

- The nature of the request and why it could not be taken in school holiday.
- General welfare of the pupil and family circumstances.
- Pupil's educational needs and ability to catch up on work missed.
- Proximity of SAT's, Phonics tests and other assessments.
- The frequency of such request from the pupil's parents.
- Amount of time requested.
- Whether a parent gave advance notice.

Exceptional circumstances will be regarded as one-off situations. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised.

The following will not be considered as "exceptional";

- Relatives coming to visit.
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad.
- Family day trips
- Visiting family and friends who have different half term holidays.

Examples of Authorised absence

- Sickness (if absences are excessive then a sick note from the doctors will be required)
- Emergency medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances (e.g.) bereavement
- Approved sporting or musical activity/competition/ examination
- Fixed term exclusion

### Examples of Unauthorised Absence

- Frequent absences attributed to minor ailments but not supported by medical evidence.
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Day trips
- Unexplained absences
- Holidays

### Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued to parents and carers for non-attendance at school as part of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003. A Penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution. It requires the parent to pay fixed amount as a fine for the child's non attendance and avoids a court appearance. Payment is £120 to be paid within 28 days. The 28 days after the date of issue as shown on the notice. If the fine is paid within 21 days payment reduces to £60. The fine will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend regularly and punctually. [Information can be found on the Derbyshire County Council Website or Appendix D](#)

### Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

- It is the belief of the staff that children are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets the needs of the children. The curriculum will be reviewed regularly and topics will be based around the children's choices.
- Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.
- Rewards will be given for monthly 100% attendance.
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be set targets for improvement and meetings will be initiated.
- Regular structured meetings will be held with the school's EWO in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance/punctuality is a concern.
- Visits to feeder schools will be made to ensure the fullest support for all children as they transfer on to their next school.

### Collection of Attendance Data

Attendance Data is collected daily, monthly and yearly. It is discussed with individual teachers, whole school and at Governors meetings and is reported in the Head teacher report.

### Monitoring of Policy

This Policy will be monitored annually by the Standards Committee and will be discussed at the Joint Heads and Chairs Meetings of the Ashbourne Schools.

Reviewed ..... date .....

Signed .....

**Appendix A**

**Example application form**

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM**

PLEASE NOTE - The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** state that Headteacher's should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Child(ren) ..... Year Group .....  
..... Year Group .....  
..... Year Group .....

Childs Address .....  
.....

Name of Applicant(s) and Address (if different).....  
.....  
.....

**I / We wish to apply for our child(ren) to be absent from school for EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES on the following dates.**

From..... To.....

Total number of days our child(ren) will be absent from school ..... Please supply in as much detail as possible the reason for your request and why you feel it is **exceptional circumstances**. Please include the names of the adult(s) who will be with your child(ren) during their absence from school.

Continue over the page if necessary

Signed (both parents if applicable) Date .....

***IF THE REQUEST IS FOR A FAMILY HOLIDAY PLEASE SUBMIT IT BEFORE THE HOLIDAY IS BOOKED.***

**Appendix B**

Example letter – leave authorised

Recipient(s) full name

Address

Dear

**Absence from School**

Thank you for your application requesting leave of absence for CHILD'S NAME, for NUMBER school days, from DATE to DATE, for the purpose of a family holiday.

In September 2013 the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Having carefully considered your application, in line with Government guidelines, I am able to grant approval for your request for NUMBER school days on the basis that the reason given is exceptional.

Yours sincerely

## Appendix C

Example letter – challenge absence

Recipient(s) full name

Address

Dear

**Absence from School**

NAME was absent from school for NUMBER days between DATE and DATE without explanation. You were sent a text message, enquiring about the reason for absence, each day during this time. (Or give details of the contacts made by school during the absence.)

I understand that CHILD'S NAME was absent from school due to a family holiday. In view of this, in accordance with Government regulation, I must mark the register for CHILD'S NAME with a 'G' which means 'unauthorised absence for a holiday during term-time'.

If this is not the case please arrange an appointment to meet with me to discuss the matter further and where possible provide evidence to support your position. Unless I hear from you in the next 5 school days you may be issued with a penalty notice for unauthorised absence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely



## Appendix D

### Education Welfare Service

#### Request for Penalty Notice(s) for Unauthorised Leave for the Purpose of a Family Holiday

##### Guidance Notes

From September, 2017 the Local Authority (LA) will consider the issue of penalty notices, at the request of Headteachers, for a period of unauthorised leave regardless of a child's 'wider school attendance'. A copy of the following information must be provided for each child before the LA can consider serving a penalty notice.

- The leave of absence request form completed by parent/carer
- Letter from school to **each** parent (to whom you want the penalty notice issuing) informing them that leave will not be authorised. This should have been sent prior to the holiday being taken or reflect the fact that the request was too late to do this.
- Or - A letter challenging unexplained absence to **each** parent (to whom you want the penalty notice issuing) stating that you believe the absence to be due to holiday or challenging parents who have provided spurious reasons for absence. This should be sent within 4 weeks of the child's return to school from leave.
- An attendance printout from the beginning of the academic year showing the unauthorised absence marked with code 'G'.
- A copy of the school policy statement in respect of unauthorised leave during term-time that supports the use of penalty notices; reflects the legislation appropriately and does not contain blanket policies. This should be the latest and dated published document (no more than 12 months old)
- A Penalty Notice request must be made within **6 weeks** of the last day of the child's absence.

##### **This information is required as, if the penalty notice is unpaid, it will be used as evidence in the event that the case proceeds to court.**

Please remember that, for legal processes, correspondence must be dated and addressed in full to the parent(s) to whom you want the penalty notice issuing and must be delivered by handing the document directly to parent or by post. Please do not deliver via the child e.g. in a book bag. Please note all correspondence should be signed by the Headteacher or Deputy with designated responsibility for the Penalty Notice process in your school.

Please forward the required documents, together with the completed request sheet to: *Penalty Notices, Education Welfare Service Central Team, Derbyshire County Council, Room 396, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG* or By email to [cayaewshq.admin@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:cayaewshq.admin@derbyshire.gov.uk)

If you have any queries regarding Penalty Notices please do not hesitate to contact Education Welfare Service Central Team on 01629 535882 or email above address.