

Ash Cartwright and Kelsey Safeguarding Attendance Policy



September 2024

Through God's love and strength all flourish

Mission Statement

Our Christian vision guides our journey to provide a rich, well-rounded education enabling all to become the very best that God intended. We treat adults and pupils with love and dignity in a space where Christian values are developed and everyone can flourish.

Friendship Joy Community Forgiveness Perseverance Creation

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance and individual support for attendance in our school is:

Name Fiona Crascall (Headteacher)

Email address or contact details via fcrascall@ashckschool.org 01304 812538

The name and contact details of the school staff member parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name Amy Blake

Email address or contact details ablake@ashckschool.org 01304 812539

Introduction and Background

Ash Cartwright and Kelsey School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. **It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.**

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: [Working together to improve school attendance](#). Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- 🌱 promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- 🌱 ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- 🌱 ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- 🌱 ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

It has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, the Local Authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- 🌱 Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- 🌱 Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality

- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the headteacher not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR				
175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments				
190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR 190 days for your child's education	5 days absence over a school year	10 days absence over a school year	19 days absence over a school year	More than 19 days absence over a school year
100%	97%	95%	90% Below 90% = persistent absentee	Less than 90% Below 50% = Severely Absent
Good Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start		Worrying Less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress		Serious Concern Not fair on your child. Possible court action!

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Ash Cartwright and Kelsey School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- 🌱 Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- 🌱 Celebrate excellent attendance by reporting class achievements to children and parents
- 🌱 Celebrate class attendance each week with 'Attendance Ted'
- 🌱 Reward good or improving attendance
- 🌱 Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance
- 🌱 Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, however is not exhaustive:

- 🌱 parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- 🌱 absences which have never been properly explained
- 🌱 children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session

- 🌳 shopping trips
- 🌳 looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- 🌳 their own or family birthdays
- 🌳 holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher - may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority
- 🌳 day trips
- 🌳 other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed
- 🌳 Illness of a parent
- 🌳 Visits to family abroad
- 🌳 Surprise trips or trips booked without knowledge

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name Amy Blake

Email address or contact details ablake@ashckschool.org 01304 812539

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- 🌳 Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8.30 am. You may call into school personally and speak to the office staff or email
- 🌳 Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.30 am
- 🌳 Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence

If your child is absent, we will:

- 🌱 Telephone you, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you, **however it is your responsibility to contact us**
- 🌱 If we are unable to contact parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding
- 🌱 A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be "missing from education."

If absence continues, we will:

- 🌱 Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern
- 🌱 Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist
- 🌱 Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- 🌱 Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- 🌱 Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Ash Cartwright and Kelsey School are:

Doors open: 8.35 am

Registration closes: 8.45 am

End of the school day: 3.15pm

How we manage lateness:

- 🌱 The school day starts at 8.35am when children can begin to come into school
- 🌱 Registers are taken at 8.45 am and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time
- 🌱 Children arriving after 8.45 am are required to come into school via the school office. Parents/carers must sign them into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded

- 🌳 At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site - 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence
- 🌳 The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the headteacher, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Being late for school has many negative consequences:

- 🌳 Gets the day off to a bad start;
- 🌳 Increases stress and upset for the child;
- 🌳 Can lead to the child feeling embarrassed and singled out;
- 🌳 Affects the child's overall confidence;
- 🌳 Disrupts the learning of other class members;
- 🌳 Creates bad habits which could lead to poor attendance;
- 🌳 Confusion for your child as work or activities might have been started



Don't be late through the gate!

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, or we can complete a request for

support. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a meeting to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

See Annex A for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance

Name Fiona Crascall (Headteacher)

Email address or contact details via fcrascall@ashckschool.org 01304 812539

The school can offer bespoke support with attendance so please speak to Mrs Crascall or Mrs Wilkinson as soon as you begin to have issues. Parents will be encouraged to meet regularly with staff to agree attendance contracts and/or strategies for support and review the outcomes after a fixed period of time.

Local Authority attendance support services

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

School Attendance and the Law

By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. The Government, School and the Local Authorities Pupil Welfare Service are working together to improve attendance. Parents and Carers must also work together with schools to promote high attendance.

The Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes came into effect on 19th August 2024.

Changes are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.

- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or her designate, acting on behalf of the Governing Board, (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing to the school. Each case will be judged on its own merits. We strongly encourage parents to have a conversation with the headteacher as soon as they are aware that leave may be requested. The school may request evidence from a family if they feel that the leave would be qualify as being in exceptional circumstances. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Kent Code of Conduct. The headteacher's decision is final and leave may not be authorised retrospectively.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Ash Cartwright and Kelsey School, other than at the end of year 6 parents/ carers are required to inform the school office in writing. The parent /carer must provide the school with the following information: child's name, date of leaving, new home address (if applicable), name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point - when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored daily and weekly. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

All school staff and the Governing Board are committed to working with parents and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance at our school as possible.

Annex A: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. September 2022

All Pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p>

	championing and improving attendance.		Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.
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Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that that the school is best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils (90% attendance or below)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered - including and parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p>

Severely absent pupils (50% or below)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p>

support offered - including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.			Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.
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Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special education need, educational psychologists and mental health services to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>