

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY- PUPILS**

Our school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

### **Our School Ethos Statement**

We recognise our special historic foundation and will preserve and develop its Christian character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England. This will also be enhanced and supported by the strong partnerships that we enjoy with the Church of St Lawrence, Ardeley and the Diocese of St Albans. We will do everything we can to serve our children and the school community as a whole by providing an inclusive education of the highest quality within the context of our Christian faith and practice. Our school will encourage an understanding of the meaning and the significance of the Christian faith, promoting its values throughout the learning and caring experiences that we offer to all of our children; “Loving and Learning in Fellowship and Faith”.

Ardeley St Lawrence Primary School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

### **Target Setting**

The school sets targets in accordance with Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 58 – the Educational (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005. The annual target is the total absences expected in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total possible attendance by pupils at the school.

### **Expectations**

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils.

The expectations of the school are:

- To provide a safe learning environment
- To ensure that all first day absence is followed up in line with KCSIE 2018
- To hold 2 contact numbers for each child in line with KCSIE 2018 recommendations
- To ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- To follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.

The expectations of parents are:

- To ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually
- To inform the school on the first day of absence of the reason for the child’s absence from school
- To maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- To ensure the school is informed of any changes of contact details.

The expectations of pupils are:

- To attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually

## **Registration**

The main gate will be opened at 8.45 and pupils should arrive at school between 8.45 and 8.55am when they should go straight to their classroom. Registers are completed on SIMS at 9.00am and 1.00pm using the codes recognised by SIMS. Pupils not present are marked as N and office staff then follow this up.

Any pupil arriving after closure of the school gates at 9.00am will be marked as late.

## **Lateness**

Any pupil arriving after the gates have closed should be brought by their parent to the front door. If the parent gives a satisfactory explanation for the lateness the child will simply be marked as late in the register by the office staff once the child has been signed into the late book.

If the office staff are in any doubt about the reason given the matter will be referred to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher may decide to mark the lateness as an unauthorised absence. This will be more likely if the lateness is persistent.

## **Following up Lateness**

Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by the Head Teacher who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality. If deemed necessary, the Head Teacher will discuss persistent lateness with the Attendance Improvement Officer allocated to the school.

## **'First Day Response'**

Ardeley St Lawrence School follows up all absences from school. If parents / carers have not contacted the school by 10am the school will contact them, working through the list of contacts given by parents. If we cannot get hold of parents then the office staff will follow the procedures laid out in Appendix A (in line with KCSIE 2018).

Contact is expected on every day of the absence unless it is clear at the outset that the pupil will need more than one day away (post-operative recuperation, contagious illness etc). We expect parents to contact us; if not we will contact them.

## **Absences**

Notification must be provided for all absences from school. This must be from a parent or guardian and is not acceptable from an older sibling, other relative or child-minder unless prior arrangement has been made with the school. The school will accept notification by telephone, letter or email.

All forms of notification should be passed immediately to the office where they are filed and remain for the academic year. Attendance and absence data is maintained using the school's SIMS software which records the reasons for all absences so that any emerging patterns can be identified.

It is at the discretion of the Head Teacher to decide whether or not to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided.

Examples of likely authorisation of absence are:

- Child is ill
- Medical appointment – verification may be requested along with a discussion regarding out of schools hours availability of appointments
- Older sibling's graduation
- Music or dance exam
- Moving house

Examples of where authorisation is very unlikely are:

- Shopping
- Illness of siblings
- Birthdays
- Holidays (unless by prior consent on the correct form but, even then, unlikely)

### **Leaving and returning during the school day**

Where possible parents are asked to give advance notice, preferably in writing, of times when children need to leave and return during the school day.

When pupils have to leave or return to school during the day parents should come to the front door to leave or collect them under the guidance of the office staff. The parent / carer should sign the child in or out in the designated book in the front entrance hall, marking the time and reason for leaving or arriving.

In the event of an emergency it is the office staff's responsibility to check the signing in / out book against registers.

### **Persistent absence**

Using the SIMS software, attendance is able to be closely monitored by the school office, the Head Teacher and the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who works closely with the school on an agreed schedule. The school office will make parents aware if a pupil's attendance falls to below 96%. If the pupil's attendance falls below 95% the Head Teacher will contact the parents / carer either by telephone or in writing to discuss the situation further unless there is a specific and acceptable reason.

Should attendance not improve and drops below 93% the Head Teacher will arrange a meeting in school with the parents / carers and the AIO. Should it be necessary the Head Teacher may also contact a Social Worker through Children, Schools and Families.

If a child has a long-term absence he/she is supported on their return to school. The class teacher will have liaised with the parents during the absence and will have sent home work unless this is inappropriate. The Head Teacher will ensure that all staff are fully informed and a meeting with parents may take place.

If a child is likely to be absent for a long time due to illness the Head Teacher will make a referral to the School Nurse Team, in consultation with the parents/ carers.

### **Term Time Holidays**

Absence from school for family holidays is not a right. Schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year, only if they believe that the circumstances warrant it. The Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 outline the conditions under which leave of absence for term time holidays may be granted. Regulation 7, states that 'leave of absence should only be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application'.

Both the Local Authority and the school take the view that taking children on holiday during term time can be damaging to a child's educational progress for two reasons. Firstly, children find it very difficult to catch up on the learning that they have missed and in the longer term this can have a negative impact on their progress. Secondly and as importantly, children can be given a very unhelpful message about the value and importance of going to school. As a result, Ardeley St Lawrence School's policy is to refuse to authorise any term-time holidays except in the most exceptional circumstances and following discussion between parents and the Head Teacher, as only the Head Teacher may grant permission for holidays

A Leave of Absence form can be requested from the school office if parents consider their situation to be exceptional and, if requesting a holiday there should be as much notice as possible and certainly not less than three weeks prior to the start of the holiday. Retrospective requests will not be granted.

### **Penalty Notices**

At Ardeley we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has 15 sessions (half day = one session) unauthorised absence in a term (including unauthorised holidays) the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance. These Penalty Notices are issued on a per parent, per child basis.

### **Publication of Information**

Parents, pupils, staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues and statistics on a regular basis through newsletters and it is a standard item for reporting termly to the Governing Board through the Head Teacher's report.

We share information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with their parents, the pupil themselves and staff. Attendance data is collected by the local authority and judgements are made about the school using this information.

This policy is available on the school's website and any changes are brought to the attention of the whole school community.

*This policy has been written and reviewed with regard to the school's Equality Scheme (2018) There were no concerns noted*

### Appendix A

## Children missing from education

When a child is marked as N in the register

Make contact with parents/ relatives to check that there is no good reason for the absence  
eg disrupted travel arrangements or illness  
Try all emergency numbers as well

Mark the absence as authorised if there is a valid reason, using the relevant code

Mark the absence as unauthorised if there is not a valid reason, using the relevant code

Notify the Headteacher or Senior Teacher in her absence

Then we will do one of the following:

- We will carry out a home visit
- We will notify the attendance team and discuss the next steps
- We may contact the police in what we consider to be an emergency

Attendance Team: Anyone who believes a child may be missing from education can contact the Duty Officer for advice on 01992 555261.  
**Or email: [attendancedutyaast@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendancedutyaast@hertfordshire.gov.uk)**