SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Approved by: SLT

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Accessibility: Available on the school website and as paper copy on request

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School

INTRODUCTION

Good attendance in school is essential for children to reach their full academic and social potential. The school, parents and the local authority work together to ensure children are attending school regularly and on time. This policy details the responsibilities of parents, the school and the local authority, together with the associated procedures and practices Ashbridge Independent School follows.

This policy is written in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024).

The school's Senior Attendance Champion is Headteacher, Karen Mehta (head@ashbridgeschool.co.uk).

For the purpose of this policy, parent means anyone with parental responsibility, natural parents and those with day-to-day responsibilities of caring for the child (ie lives with and looks after the child).

OVERVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Ashbridge Independent School will:

- Build and maintain strong relationships with families, working together to remove barriers to attending school.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture promoting the benefits of high attendance.
- Implement a clear attendance policy which all staff, parents and pupils understand.
- Accurately complete and maintain admissions and attendance registers and records.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance data and put support strategies in place where needed.
- Work with the local authority and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or SEND and provide them with additional support where required.
- Inform the local authority of children joining and leaving the school.

Parents will:

- Promote good attendance, ensuring their child attends school every day wherever possible, in line with their legal duty.
- Support their child to arrive at school punctually every day.
- Inform the school before 9:15am if their child is to be absent.
- Wherever possible, arrange medical and dental appointments outside of the school day, although we recognise this is not always an option
- Wherever possible, arrange holidays out of term time.
- Work with the school should their child be at risk of having persistent or severe absence.

The local authority will:

- Rigorously track local attendance data to provide support

- Have a School Attendance Support Team in place which provides free support, communication and advice, targeted support and legal intervention.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker.
- Process information regarding children joining and leaving the school, including those classed as Children Missing Education or those moving to Elective Home Education

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

DAILY ATTENDANCE

All children are expected to attend school daily in term time. If a child is unable to attend through illness, or any other unplanned reason, parents must contact the School Office on 01772 619900 before 9:15am on the day of absence.

If a child is absent at 9:15am and parents have not contacted the school, the School Office will endeavour to contact parents to ascertain a reason for the absence. Wherever possible, the school holds more than one contact number for pupils to ensure parents can be contacted when required.

PUNCTUALITY

All children are expected to be at school ready for their day before 8:40am. After 8:45am children are marked as late until 9:15am. After 9:15am, as the registers are closed, children are marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Parents should support their children to attend school on time to ensure their learning is not disrupted.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE INCLUDING HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Whilst there are some circumstances where children may need to be away from school other than for illness; such as attending an interview for a Senior School, or taking part in a regulated performance or sporting event, parents should avoid requesting leave from school unless absolutely necessary.

We understand that due to the working arrangements of some families or other valid reasons, it can be difficult to take holidays outside of term time. We will consider requests for holidays in term time on an individual basis, based on the attendance data for each child.

PERSISTENT OR SEVERE ABSENCE OR LATENESS

Persistent absence or lateness is an absence or lateness rate of 10% or more for any circumstance, although we will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some reasons for absence. Severe absence or lateness is an absence or lateness rate of 50% or more.

Should a child be at risk of, or have persistent or severe absence or lateness, parents maybe invited into school to discuss any potential barriers to attending school. Where appropriate, internal support and actions or support and actions from external agencies, will be agreed and reviewed at regular intervals.

ROLE OF THE SENIOR ATTENDANCE CHAMPION

Working together with the wider school team, the Senior Attendance Champion's responsibilities include:

- Championing and improving attendance in school, setting high expectations and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Having a strong grasp of attendance data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- Regularly evaluating progress of the attendance strategies and processes, recognising that improving attendance is a continuous process.
- Making sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, communicating effectively with parents and providing relevant training.
- Educating parents on the importance of good attendance and the consequences of poor attendance.
- Visibly demonstrating the benefits of good attendance such as through displays, assemblies or in class.
- Recognising that children missing education can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues and ensuring all staff have awareness around this.
- Working with local authorities to intensify support where there are safeguarding concerns, especially when absence becomes severe.
- Providing additional support and guidance for children and families when children are absent due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs or disabilities.

RECORDING OF ATTENDANCE AND ADMISSIONS

ATTENDANCE RECORDING

The school will record attendance in the morning at 8:45am and afternoon at 1:30pm, as well as in Before and After School Care. Attendance is recorded electronically and absences are marked using the recognised national attendance codes (Appendix 1).

Registers are kept for a minimum of 6 years from the date the data was collected. Amendments to attendance registers will only be made where the reason for the absence cannot be established at the time it is taken, and this can only be done within 5 days of the register being taken.

ADMISSIONS RECORDING

All pupils registered at Ashbridge Independent School are included on the school's admissions register, which is held electronically. The entry is completed no later than the child's first day of attendance at the school and contains all required information in line with legislation. (Appendix 2).

The local authority are informed of new pupils joining the school for all children other than those starting on the first day of the first term of Reception class. This is done within five days of the pupil being added to the admissions register.

Pupils are only deleted from the admissions register under the reasons set out in regulations (Appendix 3) and will not be removed for any other reason.

The local authority are informed of pupils leaving the school for all children other than those leaving on the final day of the final term of Year 6. This is usually done within five days of the pupil being removed from the admissions register, although no time frame is specified in the legislation.

MONITORING, ANALYSING AND SHARING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY DATA

Attendance and punctuality are monitored half-termly, or more regularly for any individual child or cohort that the school is concerned about. Monitoring and analysis includes:

- Monitoring and analysis of individual pupils, classes, whole school and any other recognised potential trends.
- An analysis of the current half term and the full year to date.
- Sharing this information with class teachers and senior leaders.
- Sharing data on absence rates with the local authority as per their policies.
- Benchmarking against local, regional and national data to devise improvement strategies.
- Discussion in DSL meeting about any children who are persistently or severely absent or late.
- Devising and implementing strategies or action plans for cohorts or individual pupils.
- Evaluate the success of strategies against previous school data.

Reports on attendance and punctuality are shared with parents termly, unless they are persistently or severely late or absent, and give not only percentages but detail on elements such as the amount of time missed and the impact this can have on the child's attainment.

Legal interventions may be enforced by the local authority to protect children's right to an education if a child has severe absence and where all other avenues have been exhausted.

APPENDIX 1 – REGISTER CODES

Category	Code	Usually logged by	When used
Attending School	AC	Teacher	Attending class as planned, whilst the registers are still open.
Attending School	L	Teacher	Late arrival before the register is closed (please note at the present time this is not a code but is added as a note and tracked weekly)
Attending a place other than school	K*	School Admin	Attending a place other than the school for educational provision arranged by the local authority
Attending a place other than school	V	School Admin	Attending an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by school staff.
Attending a place other than school	P	Teacher / School Admin	Attending an approved sporting activity off the school site, supervised by an appropriate person.
Attending a place other than school	W*	School Admin	Attending approved work experience as part of the child's education
Attending a place other than school	B	Teacher / School Admin	Attending any other approved activity, such as school transition or taster days.
Absent - Leave of Absence	C1	School Admin	Participating in a regulated performance such as a theatre production
Absent - Leave of Absence	M	Teacher / School Admin	Attending a medical or dental appointment
Absent - Leave of Absence	J1	School Admin	Attending an interview for a new school
Absent - Leave of Absence	S	School Admin	Studying for a public examination
Absent - Leave of Absence	X*	School Admin	Pupil under compulsory school age not timetabled to attend
Absent - Leave of Absence	C2	School Admin	Part time timetable agreed
Absent - Leave of Absence	D*	School Admin	Duel registered at another school
Absent - Leave of Absence	C	School Admin	Exceptional circumstances - including holidays
Absent - Other Authorised Reasons	T*	School Admin	'Mobile' child (of no fixed abode) travelling with parents
Absent - Other Authorised Reasons	R	Teacher / School Admin	Religious Observance such as Eid, Diwali or any other religious event
Absent - Other Authorised Reasons	I	Teacher / School Admin	Unable to attend due to illness
Absent - Other Authorised Reasons	E	School Admin	Permanently or temporarily excluded

Absent - Unable to Attend (Unavoidable)	Q*	School Admin	Unable to attend as local authority have not provided required home to school travel
Absent - Unable to Attend (Unavoidable)	Y1*	School Admin	Unable to attend because the usual approved local authority home to school travel is unavailable
Absent - Unable to Attend (Unavoidable)	Y2	Teacher / School Admin	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption
Absent - Unable to Attend (Unavoidable)	Y3*	School Admin	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Absent - Unable to Attend (Unavoidable)	Y4	School Admin	Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Absent - Unable to Attend (Unavoidable)	Y5*	School Admin	Unable to attend due to being in police or youth detention
Absent - Unable to Attend (Unavoidable)	Y6	School Admin	Unable to attend in line with public health guidance or law
Absent - Unable to Attend (Unavoidable)	Y7	School Admin	Unable to attend due to any other emergency affecting the PUPIL, not the parents
Absent - Unauthorised Absence	G	School Admin	Holiday not approved by the school
Absent - Unauthorised Absence	N	Teacher	Absent but no reason has yet been established
Absent - Unauthorised Absence	O	Teacher / School Admin	Absent in other unknown circumstance, such as not being satisfied with the reason given
Absent - Unauthorised Absence	U	School Admin	Arrived after registers close at 9:30 or 14:00

APPENDIX 2 – CONTENTS OF THE ADMISSIONS REGISTER

For every pupil the admissions register will contain:

- Full name
- Name the pupil uses at school
- Sex
- Address, including changes of address whilst attending the school
- The full name and address of each of the pupil's parents
- Which of the parents, if any, the pupil normally lives with and at least one telephone number by which each such parent can be contacted in an emergency
- Date of birth
- Date of starting at the school
- Name and address of the last school attended, if any

And upon leaving

- Date of leaving the school
- Name and address of destination school, if any

APPENDIX 3 – GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL FROM ADMISSIONS REGISTER

For children of compulsory school age

- A – Pupil registered at another school
- B – Not continued at the school following completion of nursery education
- C – Pupil is also registered at one or more other schools and the other schools have agreed the deletion
- D – Pupil has a school attendance order which has been changed to name another school
- E – Pupil had a school attendance order that has been revoked
- F – Parent of a pupil has notified the school in writing that the pupil will be leaving the school to be educated otherwise than at a school
- G – Pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school
- H – Pupil has not returned following a leave of absence
- I – Pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days or more
- J – Pupil is detained under a sentence of detention
- K – Pupil has died
- L & M - Not relevant
- N – Pupil has ceased to be a pupil at an independent school or non-maintained special school
- O – Pupil has been permanently excluded from the school

For children of non-compulsory school age

- A & B – Not relevant
- C – Pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of 20 school days or more
- D – Pupil has died
- E – Pupil has been permanently excluded from the school