



Policy for

Primary Attendance and Absence

Prepared by:	Adopted by AET
KDS	Autumn 2025

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Statement of intent

All AET policies are written to support our schools and communities. We do this by ensuring they are always in line with our Colleague Values:



Applying these values to everything we do means always acting with integrity, in the interests of others, being honest, open and transparent and putting the safety of our children first.

Ash Grove Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is **Deborah Johnson**, and can be contacted via email at **admin@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk** Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2025) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The LAC has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained, including 'unwell' or 'tired'
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school gates open at **8:45am** and the school day starts at **9:00am**, meaning pupils will be in their classroom and ready to begin lessons at this time. Pupils are therefore expected to be on the school site by **8:55am**. Pupils will have a morning break at **10:45am**, which will last until **11:00am**, and a lunch break at **12:15pm**, which will last until **1:00pm** – pupils will be expected to be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be **marked at 9:00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by **9:20am**. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.
- The morning register will close at **9:30am**. Pupils will **receive a mark of absence** if they do not attend school before this time and no valid reason has been given.
- The afternoon register will be marked at **1:00pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:10pm**. Pupils will **receive a mark of absence** if they are not present by this time and no valid reason has been given.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register at 9:30am** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call, email or text message as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** school days in a row, or more than **10 school days in one term**, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of **persistent absence**, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the Local Authority, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed **10 school sessions** or more (morning sessions or afternoon sessions) without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **85 percent**, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Attendance register

The school uses ARBOR to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of each afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

Attendance and absence codes (from 19th August 2024)



Working for a brighter future together

/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Attending other approved educational activity (not sporting or work experience). See * and **. See note *** re remote education
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.

C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable .
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registered at another school and attending the other school for that session. (Not classed as a possible attendance)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
G	Holiday not granted by school.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments).
J1	Absence to attend an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority but not at a school they are registered at. See **
L	Late (before reg closed)
M	Medical or dental appointments
N	Reason for absence not yet established. See ****
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.
P	Approved sporting activity. See *
Q	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause – Local Authority has not met duty under regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements.
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave for a public exam
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes. NB definition of pupil's this applies to.
U	Arrived in school after registration closes.
V	Educational visit – attending an educational trip or visit arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.
W	Work experience. See *
Y1	Unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of pupil's home and transport to and from school normally provided is not available.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.
Y3	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and pupil cannot be accommodated in parts of the premises that remain in use.
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend because pupil is subject to a sentence of detention.
Y6	Travel to or attendance at school would be contrary/prohibited by guidance/law relating to incidence or transmission of infection or disease.
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. See **
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

* Not taking place at school, not arranged by the LA, educational in nature, school has approved attendance, school satisfied the activity is supervised by appropriate person.

** School must record the nature of the activity eg. Taster day at another school (code B) Medical Needs tuition (Code K) or the nature of the unavoidable cause (code Y7).

*** Pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register.

**** Every effort should be made to establish the reason for absence. Another code must be entered after 5 days. If no reason can be established, then Code O should be entered.

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Where there is more than one afternoon session, and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the school will use the codes from the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the principal – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the principal, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The principal's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the principal in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the principal will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will **not be granted** in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher / principal to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher / principal will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the principal will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.

- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the principal– it is at the principal's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the principal. The principal will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The principal reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within **one week** of the request.

Parents will be required to meet their child **at the school office** when taking them off the premises. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return - no pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The principal reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the principal's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the principal.

Permission will be updated on a **termly** basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

10. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **9:00am** and **1:00pm**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the **school office** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the principal is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued in line with the Penalty notices and legal intervention section of this policy where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. Absent pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the principal immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the principal
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - All storage areas
 - The library and intervention spaces
 - All meeting rooms
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- If the child cannot be located on the school grounds after **10 minutes**, all available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted. Parents of the pupil will also be notified using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.

- The absent pupil's teacher will log the incident using the electronic safeguarding system, CPOMs, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The principal will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The principal will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the principal in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the principal and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

14. Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Hold weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15. Penalty Notices and Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour, or if further support or other legal intervention is more appropriate.
- Whether issuing a penalty notice in this case is appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010, such as if the pupil has a disability.
- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the principal/school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the principal will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued by the principal or someone authorised by them (the vice principal or a member of the safeguarding or attendance team), the LA office, or the police. Any penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance.

Penalty notices will be implemented as follows:

- **First notice:** The first penalty notice is a flat rate of £160, but you can pay a reduced rate of £80 if paid within 21 days.
- **Second notice:** If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year period, it will be charged at a flat rate of £160.

- **Third and subsequent notices:** For a third offense within three years, a penalty notice will not be issued. Instead, the case may be prosecuted in court.
- **How absences are counted:** The threshold for a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorized absence within a rolling 10-week period, which can span different terms or school years. These absences do not have to be consecutive.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined as follows:

- **Standard offence:** If the case goes to court under Section 444(1), the fine can be up to **£1,000 per parent**.
- **Aggravated offence:** If the parent knew about the unauthorised absence and failed to act, the fine can be up to **£2,500 per parent** and/or a prison sentence of up to three months.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the Local Authority (LA) a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence for:

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups

- Individual pupils
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM
- Pupils at risk of PA

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Local Academy Committee, or governing body (LAC), will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions. Please see the Trust Development Plan for more details.

17. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The LAC will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The LAC will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the principal to reflect any changes or updates.

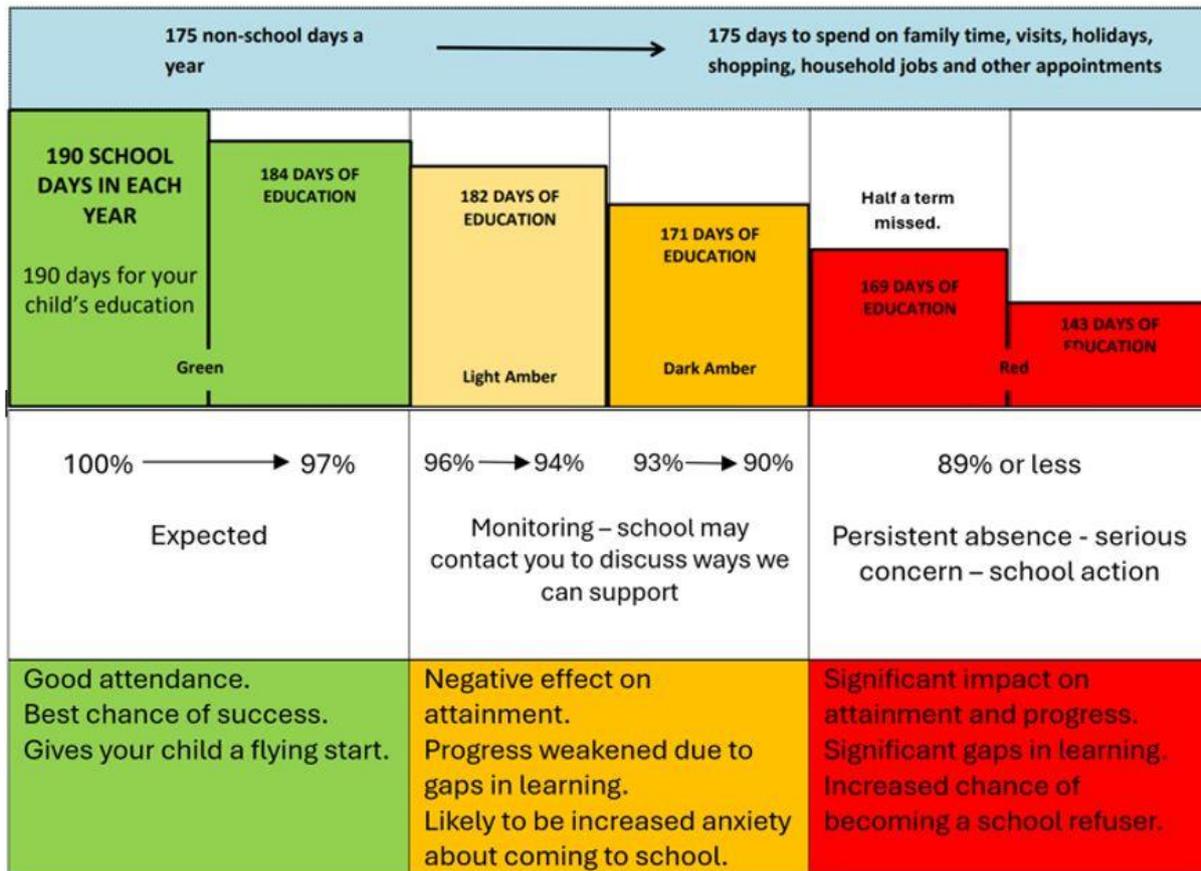
Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Ash Grove Academy has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. The SLT and attendance officer regularly review attendance data and identify any pupils for whom attendance is a concern.
2. Any attendance or punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT and may be recorded on CPOMs.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. Attendance is reported to parents four times a year: at parent/carer meetings in the autumn and spring terms, and as part of the written report sent home in spring and summer. This report involves sharing the pupil's attendance as a percentage and as a colour: **Green = above 95%**, **Amber = 90%-95%**, **Red = below 90%**. The pupil's full attendance certificate may also be shared. A member of SLT will talk to parents/carers at these meetings, whose children's attendance is a concern, as a form of early intervention and offer of support.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls **below 95%**, this is reported to parents and carers.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls **below 90%**, the pupil's attendance is monitored, and the attendance officer or member of SLT may contact the parents/carers to discuss this.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for **two weeks** and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents/carers are required to attend a meeting in school to discuss how school and home can work together to improve attendance. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who may then conduct a home visit.
9. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to **95% or above**.
10. If targets are not met, the SLT or attendance officer may make a referral to the EWO. Education Welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A **four-week** monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement after an additional **four weeks**, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

Attendance graphic shared with parents and carers



Attendance letter to parents/carers – 90% - 95%

Dear Parents and Carers,

As part of our whole school attendance policy, I am writing to give you a bit more information regarding your child’s school attendance.

*****’s attendance is currently **%

You can see where this fits into the table below:

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 Green	184 DAYS OF EDUCATION	182 DAYS OF EDUCATION Light Amber	171 DAYS OF EDUCATION Dark Amber	Half a term missed. 169 DAYS OF EDUCATION	143 DAYS OF EDUCATION Red
100% → 97% Expected	96% → 94%	93% → 90%	89% or less Persistent absence - serious concern – school action		
Good attendance. Best chance of success. Gives your child a flying start.	Negative effect on attainment. Progress weakened due to gaps in learning. Likely to be increased anxiety about coming to school.		Significant impact on attainment and progress. Significant gaps in learning. Increased chance of becoming a school refuser.		

A year has **365 days**.

A school year is made up of **190 days IN SCHOOL** and **175 days NOT IN SCHOOL**.

A school day is divided into two sessions: morning and afternoon.

Therefore, from the time children start school in their Reception class, they are expected to attend 380 sessions from September to July.

Every school day counts towards your child’s future, and persistent absence or being frequently late to school is one of the biggest barriers to children achieving their potential and going on to fulfil their aspirations.

The Department for Education is very clear on their approach and have changed the legislation around school attendance, publishing their *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance in August 2024. You can find this document by clicking [here](#).

Holidays

Last year, Cheshire East Local Authority issued the following statement to schools and parents/carers:

“The Department for Education (DfE) has announced important amendments to legislation surrounding absence in term time. The new legislation does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday. Any application for leave of absence must be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave of absence. Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. High levels of absence have led the DfE to make this important change of legislation.”

Please bear this in mind, as holidays during term time **WILL NOT** be authorised, even for children whose attendance is 97% or above.

In line with the DfE legislation outlined above, any request for holidays during term time may lead to us informing the Local Authority and a fine being issued.

More information can be found [here](#).

Illness

We understand that children are often absent because they are poorly. As a mother myself, I know how difficult it is to send your child into school if they are not feeling well. However, I would ask that you also remember that we have a legal duty of care to your children, and we would not keep them in school if we felt that the best place for them was at home in bed.

In our experience, children often perk up once they are in school, distracted by their friends and their learning, so we would urge you to get them up, dressed and into school. If they do not improve, we will of course contact you and ask that you collect them and take them home.

Please know that **we want to work with you, in the best interests of your child**, to ensure they come to school every day and receive the best possible education.

We will continue to monitor your child’s attendance and are confident that we can work together to see it improve over the coming weeks.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Principal

Attendance letter to parents/carers – BELOW 90%

Dear Parents and Carers,

As part of our whole school attendance policy, I am writing to give you a bit more information regarding your child’s school attendance.

*****’s attendance is currently **%

You can see where this fits into the table below:

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 Green	184 DAYS OF EDUCATION	182 DAYS OF EDUCATION Light Amber	171 DAYS OF EDUCATION Dark Amber	Half a term missed. 169 DAYS OF EDUCATION	143 DAYS OF EDUCATION Red
100% → 97% Expected	96% → 94%	93% → 90%	89% or less Persistent absence - serious concern – school action		
Good attendance. Best chance of success. Gives your child a flying start.	Negative effect on attainment. Progress weakened due to gaps in learning. Likely to be increased anxiety about coming to school.		Significant impact on attainment and progress. Significant gaps in learning. Increased chance of becoming a school refuser.		

A year has **365 days**.

A school year is made up of **190 days IN SCHOOL** and **175 days NOT IN SCHOOL**.

A school day is divided into two sessions: morning and afternoon.

Therefore, from the time children start school in their Reception class, they are expected to attend 380 sessions from September to July.

Every school day counts towards your child’s future, and **persistent absence below 90% or being frequently late to school** is one of the biggest barriers to children achieving their potential and going on to fulfil their aspirations.

Please know that we want to work with you, in the best interests of your child, to ensure they come to school every day and receive the best possible education.

We will be monitoring your child's attendance closely over the coming half term. If there is no improvement, you will be invited in for a meeting to discuss this further. If, in the meantime, you would like to request a meeting so that we can discuss ways to support you with your child's attendance, please do get in touch.

Best wishes,

Principal