



Ash Manor School

Student Attendance Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible:	Experience
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	SLT Lead for Attendance
Status & Review Cycle:	Non-statutory 3 years
Next Review Date:	July 2024
Document Version Control:	
V1.0 July 2021	

Introduction

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that students attend school regularly and all students should be at school, on time, during term time unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly, this Policy sets out how, together, we can achieve this.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is a joint responsibility between parents/guardians/carers, students, staff and the Local Education Authority.

To help us all to focus on this we will endeavour to:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all students, at least twice daily.
- Monitor every student's attendance.
- Contact parents/guardians/carers as soon as possible when a student fails to attend, where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Celebrate good attendance/punctuality in assemblies;
- Reward good or improving attendance, with certificates, rewards etc;
- Where appropriate initiate the Attendance Panel's procedures for students with poor attendance.
- Invite you to discuss persistent absence with the appropriate person – Attendance Officer/Academic Progress Manager/Senior member of staff and/or the local Inclusion Officer (IO).

Understanding types of absence

Each day is marked as two sessions, am and pm. Each session of absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/guardians/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/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 given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/guardians/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after close of registration 09:30am – "U" code.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Ash Manor School Student Attendance Policy

In cases where a student's attendance falls below 95%, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

- Phone call or email to parent by Head of House or Attendance team and issues discussed with student within school.
- Letter sent to parents stating concerns.
- Meeting at school with Head of House or Attendance officer.

If this is unsuccessful, the school will refer to the Inclusion Service.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects..

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school before 9.00am to report a student's absence and phone each day the child is absent from school. 01252 353900 x 225
- Ensure a letter of confirmation is sent to the Form Tutor/Attendance Officer when the student returns to school
- Contact the school promptly whenever a problem occurs that may keep the child away from school

If your child is absent we will:

- Contact you on the first day of absence if we have not received any form of communication
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer / Head of House or Assistant Headteacher if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the (IO) if, despite the school's best efforts to work with parents/carers, the student's attendance remains a concern.

The role of the Inclusion Officer (IO)

Parents/guardians/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer your child to the Inclusion Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanction such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/guardians/carers or children may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to

ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority. The IO meets weekly with the Attendance Office and at least half termly with the Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 8.35am and we expect students to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 8.40am and students will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9.30am the register will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but late after close of registration and this will be classified as an unauthorised absence unless reasons for absence are provided by the parent and school accept them as reasonable. If the absence is unauthorised this may result in a referral to the IO and legal sanctions if the problem persists.

If a student has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Tutor and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in term time

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise that you book family holidays during the school holidays. Surrey Secondary Heads have agreed that requests for holiday absence will not be granted, except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Leave of Absence

On occasions, where it is felt to be impossible to avoid the need for absence during the school term, parents must request a Leave of Absence form from the Headteacher by completing an 'Application for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances' form. However, unless the reason is deemed as acceptable for very special circumstances, or the trip is an educational one, run by an official club or activity the absence will not be authorised. If students are taken out of school without the Headteacher's authorisation the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the matter referred to the Inclusion Officer who would investigate and consider overall attendance. This may result in prosecution or the issue of a penalty notice for parent's failure to ensure regular school attendance. Absence during examination periods is subject to additional measures nationally. If a student is absent from an examination, a medical note from a medical professional is required confirming the inability to attend. If this is not supplied, parents/guardians/ carers will be billed for the cost of the examination(s) missed and risk a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

Absence due to illness/appointments

Students may have dental or medical appointments in school time. However, parents / carers should try to make routine appointments during the school holidays or after school hours. If a student needs to leave the premises during school time they must bring a note from home or an appointment card to be initialed by the Form Tutor. They must sign out at Student Reception before leaving and sign in on their return. These are important procedures in helping to ensure the safety and welfare of all our students.

Where there is an excessive amount of absence due to sickness the school may request that medical evidence be provided and, if this is not provided, such absence will not be authorised and the school is likely to refer the matter to the IO to investigate further.

Illness during the school day

If your child is unwell during the school day he or she must ask for permission to go to the school medical room and, if necessary, parents or carers will be contacted for their son or daughter to go home. Students must not contact parents or carers directly to make arrangements to go home.

Penalty Notices

The IO, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or IO
- Where a child is taken out of school for holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice for each child. In these circumstances a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
- Students identified by Police and IO's engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

Ash Manor School Student Attendance Policy

- Late arrival after the close of registration on 5 occasions during a half term, where the student's attendance falls below 90%. The lateness will be recorded in accordance with the 'Registration and Lateness' section of this policy.
- Unauthorised absence 'O' code or 'U' code with at least 10 sessions could be liable for a penalty notice.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Students moving schools

The school will only remove a child from roll when they have started at another school or an alternative provision in accordance with regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Children will be expected to attend their current school until they start their new school and any absences at this time will be treated as unauthorised.