



Ash Manor School

Student Attendance Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible:	Experience
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	SLT Lead for Attendance
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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.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

The table below shows the impact of accumulated absence over time, in terms of missed learning. It should be noted that 90% seems to be a high figure, yet over the course of a student's time in secondary school, would result in the loss of half a year's learning.

Attendance rate (%)	Approximate number of days of missed learning per year	Approximate time of missed learning by the end of Year 11
100%	0	0
95%	10	¼ of a year
90%	20	½ of a year
85%	30	¾ of a year
80%	40	One school year

As a parent/carer you want the best for your children. Having a good education is an important factor in opening up more opportunities in adult life.

This Policy sets out how, together, we can achieve this, through maximum possible attendance.

Promoting regular attendance

If you have chosen to register your child at Ash Manor School you are legally responsible for ensuring they attend school regularly and punctually (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law. 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, taking action where the attendance data falls below acceptable thresholds.
- 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/ Tutor / Head of House / Senior member of staff and/or the Local Authority Inclusion Officer (IO).

Please contact the following member of staff with any attendance queries you may have:

Attendance Champion: Miss Whitfield (cwhitfield@ashmanorschool.com)

Attendance Officer: Mrs Dodge (adodge@ashmanorschool.com)

Assistant Head Teacher (attendance lead): Mr Whitby (awhitby@ashmanorschool.com)

Alternatively, you can contact your child's tutor or Head of House. Contact details can be found on the Ash Manor School website.

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 Local 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.

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In cases where a student's attendance falls below 95%, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent(s) / carer(s) in the following ways:

- Contact you on the first day of absence if we have not received any form of communication

- Send a reminder on the second day if there is no communication regarding the absence
- The Tutor / Head of House will call after two or more days of absence if circumstances are not known
- Arrange a Home Visit to discuss supporting attendance
- Issue 'letter 1' – attendance concern
- Issue 'letter 2' – request for supporting medical evidence
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer / Head of House or Assistant Headteacher if absences persist
- Issue a Notice to Improve and / or Penalty Notice (see below) where there has been insufficient engagement or improvement in attendance
- Refer the case to the Local Authority who will consider legal action

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. You can do this in the following ways:

- Use the *Studybugs* app online or on your mobile device.
- Use the link to absences on the school's website
- Phone the school on 01252 353900 x Option 1

You must contact the school each day of your child's absence.

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 9.10am 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 Head of House / 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 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. 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. 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 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 child to go home. Students must not contact parents or carers directly to make arrangements to go home.

Penalty Notices

The regulations regarding the issue of penalty notices (The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024), with effect from 19th August 2024 onwards, are as follows:

- 1) If a parent / carer has not incurred a Penalty Notice relating to their child / children in a rolling 3-year period since 19th August 2024, then the Penalty Notice will be charged at the rate of £160, **per parent / carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against the parent / carer in the Magistrates Court.
- 2) If a parent / carer has incurred a Penalty Notice relating to their child / children since 19th August 2024, the rolling 3-year period will be activated from the date of the first Penalty Notice and the second Penalty Notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160, **per parent / carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against the parent / carer in the Magistrates Court.
- 3) If a parent / carer has incurred two Penalty Notices relating to their child / children in the rolling 3-year period since the first Penalty Notice was issued, then the parent / carer will NOT receive a third Penalty Notice. Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent / carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

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

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. 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 and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when

they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them 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.