



Ashbrook School Attendance Policy

Date	<u>Reviewed By</u>	Review Date
February 2024	Toni Cole (DSL) Jamie Ainscow (Headteacher)	January 2025
September 2024	Toni Cole (DSL) Jamie Ainscow (Headteacher)	September 2025
September 2025	Toni Cole (DSL) Jamie Ainscow (Headteacher)	September 2026

Attendance policy 2025-26

This attendance policy aligns to [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Aims and Objectives

To promote good attendance (96% and above) which is vital to children's educational achievement, wellbeing and keeping them safe.

Good attendance is defined as:

- 96% and above
- Children attending every day the school is open
- Children arriving on time
- Children being collected on time
- All leave, unless deemed exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher, to be taken in school holidays

Give parents clarity on school's expectations for children's attendance and the processes that will be followed by school should good school attendance not be achieved.

To work with the Local Authority to ensure statutory attendance processes are followed.

To have a policy in which school support parents with improving school attendance.

To ensure all work with families on attendance is contextual to each individual and children's needs. The needs of the child and family, in line with the Equality Act 2010, will always be considered when monitoring attendance.

For our school's attendance to be at least in line with National figures (including attendance, persistent absence and punctuality).

Roles and responsibilities of parents and carers

At Ashbrook School, we believe close and collaborative working relationships with parents / carers are very important and central to all children being as successful as they can be. Parents and carers are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together.

In line with government recommendations and requirements, Ashbrook School will not be able to authorise absences unless they are deemed exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher. It is always in the child's best interest to keep absences to the bare minimum. Where absence is authorised, for exceptional circumstances only, evidence for the school records will be requested.

Parents / carers are required to make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, the office should be informed in advance and given evidence for this appointment (for example, a medical letter). A 'present' mark can still be awarded if the child attends for registration and as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole session.

Should your child be absent for an unplanned reason, please see Appendix 1 for the process to follow.

For planned absence, see Appendix 2.

Recording attendance

Ashbrook will continue to adhere to the DfE requirements [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/901222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

It is important to note that attendance continues to be mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends school every day where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education (schools must notify as per requirements).

Ashbrook School value the relationships with their families and children and therefore will work in close collaboration to support families and children to be in school every day. Whatever the reasons for absence, Ashbrook School will work closely in partnership with families and the children to fully explore their reasons and support all children attending school every day.

Although we will do everything we can to work closely with our families and children to support and reassure them, we will be clear with them that their child (when of compulsory school age) is in school every day the school is open, unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc.).

Attendance monitoring

The attendance team will analyse the school attendance data on a regular basis and follow up with any absences or concerns that arise from this meeting. During this meeting, patterns will be analysed including those of all key vulnerable groups and any additional targeted and identified children within school. Any specific concerns that arise during these meetings will be discussed with the parent or carers of these children and actions will be set. Additionally, in these meetings, we will review any child/children whose attendance has fallen below our thresholds and appropriate action will be taken in line with our procedures below. These meetings will also offer the opportunity to celebrate success where attendance or punctuality of individuals or key groups has improved as a result of the actions taken.

Attendance procedures

In a school day, there are 2 sessions – AM and PM registration marks.

The school gates will open at 8.30am and remain open until 8.40am. Registers open at 8.30am and will remain open until 9am. Drop off after 8.40am will be marked as Late (with an L code) and drop off after 9am will be marked as an Unauthorised Absence (with a U Code).

Below 96%

If your child's attendance falls below 96%, you will receive a leaflet of signposted support (Appendix 4). Please contact the school office if you wish to discuss this further with a member of the attendance team. Your child's attendance will continue to be monitored until they are at 96% or above.

Below 90% (Persistent absence)

If your child's attendance falls below 90%, they are considered to be a persistent absentee and you will be sent a letter to inform you of this. A 'Connections Meeting' with the attendance team will be offered if needed to discuss ways in which we can support you to improve your child's attendance in school.

Below 88%

If your child's attendance falls below 88%, we will follow a Tiered approach to support.

Tier 1: You will be invited to complete a formal action plan, either face to face or over the phone, (Appendix 5) to support you in improving your child's attendance. An Early Help Assessment will be offered to you. **Whilst on an attendance plan absence will only be authorised if proof of the reason is provided (this includes illness).**

Tier 2: While the action plan is in process, school will be monitoring trends in your child's attendance. If your child's attendance continues to drop you may be invited to a panel meeting with the attendance team and the headteacher, where next steps will be discussed.

Tier 3: Despite Tier 1 and 2, if your child's attendance drops to 80% or below, school may make a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub for external support to improve your child's school attendance. As part of this referral, we will involve the Local Authority.

Below 50% (Severe absence)

If your child's absence falls below 50%, they are considered to be a severe absentee. At this point, the Local Authority are responsible for the support and sanctions in place.

Notice to Improve

If your child has 5 days (10 sessions) or more of unauthorised leave in a 10 week period we may issue a notice to improve. Please note arriving late after the register closes will count towards this tally.

If improvement is not seen and there are further unauthorised absences during your notice to improve, then a FPN can be issued for persistent lateness or regular absence.

Punctuality

Being on time to school (prior to 8.40am) allows your child the best chance to settle and be prepared for the day.

8:30-8:40am Gates and registers open.

Arrival between 8:40-9am will result in a Late mark (L Code).

Arrival from 9am onwards will result in the U Code; this counts as 1 unauthorised session. Please see section on Fixed Penalty Notices for more information.

If your child is regularly late (L Code), you will receive a phone call from someone in the attendance team to check in and see if there are any ways we can support you. You will receive a Helpful hints guide on how to ensure your child gets to school on time. (See Appendix 6)

If we don't see a sustained improvement after this check in, you will be invited in for a 'Connections Meeting' to discuss support mechanisms. This may include an Early Help Assessment to support you in improving punctuality.

Leave of Absence (planned)

To request a Leave of Absence, please complete the Leave of Absence Form on our website asap and at least two weeks prior to the absence (Appendix 2). If the absence is for an hospital/GP/Dentist appointment please provide proof of this to the school office.

If you are requesting a longer period of absence (i.e for travel) you will then be sent a more detailed form to complete. Upon completing the detailed form, you will be contacted by the school attendance team. This will be via letter or (if 5 days or more) via telephone to discuss your absence request. If the absence is greater than 10 school days, you will be required to attend a meeting with a member of the attendance team as part of our approach to keep school attendance high (providing your child is statutory school age).

When a leave of absence request is made for travel we will need evidence of flight details if travelling abroad, or of booking details if staying within the UK – following our Safeguarding practice. Please note, this evidence is required even if a meeting has not taken place.

Authorised Absence (Illness)

Any absence taken within term time should be minimal and will only be authorised if considered exceptional circumstances. This may include recognised sporting events, immediate family funeral or wedding, hospital visits and religious observances. Please note, only one day will be authorised for these circumstances.

If your child is feeling mildly unwell, it is always best to send them into school. We can monitor them and administer Calpol if required. We would contact parents if we feel they are becoming worse. The NHS guidance – [is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-keep-your-child-off-school/) - outlines when it is best to keep your child off school.

Absence for illness will usually be authorised. If your child is off due to illness, we will follow the procedures outlined in Appendix 1. This is to ensure children's wellbeing and safety and, if any support is required, we are able to do so.

If your child has repeated periods of illness throughout the year, a member of the attendance or pastoral team will contact you to offer support and signpost to further help if required.

Attendance Codes

Inactive Codes

The **J** code has been replaced by a new code **J1** and has changed from and Approved Educational Activity to Authorised Absence.

Other new Codes

K Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority
(its set in place by the LA and not the school)

Q Unable to attend the school because of access arrangements.
(use this code where the LA has failed to arrange transport for the student, Y1 is used if the organised transport is not available)

Y1 Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Y2 Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Y3 Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4 Unable to attend due to whole school being closed

Y5 Unable to attend due as pupil is in criminal justice detention

- Y6 Absent in accordance with public health guidance or Law
- Y7 Unable to attend because of other unavoidable Cause
- C Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstance (Guidance changed for this Code)
- C1 Leave of Absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance (Or employment paid or unpaid, Continue to use W for Works Experience)
- C2 Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Codes where schools MUST record nature of activity

B Attending any other approved educational activity

(Not Sporting Activity OR Works Experience)

Examples of nature of activity

- 1) Attending taster days at college
- 2) Attending courses at college
- 3) Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school

K Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority

(A pupil attending a provision arranged by the school should use the code P or B)

Examples of natures of provision

- 1) Attending courses at college
- 2) Attending unregistered alternative provision such as home tutoring

Y7 Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

The DfE has not given any examples for the nature of the unavoidable cause

From the working together document

Fixed Penalty Notices

Appendix 2 outlines the school's process for planned absence which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

A fine becomes effective if a child has had more than ten unauthorised sessions or five days absence in a 10-week period, beginning from the first unauthorised absence. Further details of the FPN are included below. If a holiday is taken without it being authorised, the school is required to report the absence to the Local Authority.

A FPN can be issued to each parent, per child.

A fine of £80 per child per parent is payable in 21 days and, if there is a failure to pay after that time, it rises to £160 per child per parent payable in 28 days.

If a second leave of absence is taken within 3 years, a fine of £160 per child per parent is payable in 28 days (with no reduction for early payment).

If a third leave of absence is taken within 3 years, a fixed penalty notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Magistrate's fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on a parent's future DBS certificate due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period will be considered for a fixed penalty notice (this includes a child being late after registers close).

Celebrating great attendance

At Ashbrook School, we have high expectations for attendance and want our children to be in every day the school is open. Each half term we will celebrate those children who have had no unauthorised absence that term.

Roles and responsibilities of staff and Governors

It is the schools' responsibility to update parents on their child's attendance, pupil's attendance record can be viewed via your MCAS account. It is the parent/carers responsibility for informing the school of any absence.

Ashbrook School share data with the local authority to monitor and review attendance across the county. We also review attendance data within school, as mentioned in the policy above. Data is also shared with Governors who challenge us in improving attendance and reduce absence.

Staff responsible for Attendance:

Toni Cole– Attendance Officer

Jamie Ainscow – Head Teacher

Marina Moore – First response and registers.

Cheryl Ferguson – Pastoral support

Attendance Governor:

Samantha James (Safeguarding Governor)

IfTL:

Victoria Blackmore (Safeguarding Lead for IfTL)

Appendix 1

Unplanned Absence Process

Parent's/Carer's are required to inform school of unplanned absence by 8.30am EVERYDAY via MCAS or telephone.

DAY 1 of Absence

Has Parent/Carer informed school of absence via MCAS or telephone by 8.30am?

- YES – school will update BROMCOM with relevant attendance code
- NO – if no contact is made with parents a home welfare visit will be carried out. If no-one is home a letter will be left and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will be informed. School will continue to try and make contact.

DAY 3 onwards of Absence

School may carry out a home welfare check to ensure all is well and offer support to pupil and family.

DAY 5 of Absence

Proof of illness will be required.

If we have no proof and have not seen the pupil during a welfare check then all absence will be unauthorised.

5 days of unauthorised absence will then lead to a notice to improve which can result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Appendix 2

Planned Leave of Absence Process

1. Parent/carers inform school of planned absence ASAP via leave of absence form on the school website (see below).

If you are requesting term time leave for travel or any other reason we need further details for, you will be sent a longer form to complete (appendix 3).

The relevant proof must be sent in ASAP i.e flight details, booking details, exceptional circumstances.

It is part of our school safeguarding responsibility to confirm where a child will be during a period of absence.

2. For 1-4 days absence you will receive a letter via MCAS regarding your request.

For 5-9 days a member of our attendance team will contact you via telephone to discuss your request.

For 10 days or more you will be required to attend a meeting with the attendance lead to discuss your request.

3. Any absence/term time leave taken should be minimal and will only be authorised if considered exceptional circumstances. This may include pupils undergoing medical procedures, pupils taking part in a recognised sporting events, immediate family funeral or wedding, Pupils hospital/GP visits and religious observances.
4. If your request is or 5 days or more and is not considered exceptional circumstances a warning letter will be sent outlining the current guidelines regarding attendance and next steps (Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) request sent to council) dependant on child's age and current attendance record. Please note, an absence of 20 school days or more may result in your child being removed from roll.
 - Under 5 years – unauthorised but no FPN issued.
 - Over 5 years old/over 5 days unauthorised absence FPN request sent to Milton Keynes City Council on return to school.

Leave of absence request (form on school website)

Please complete the below form to request a leave of absence. This will be reviewed by our attendance officer who will be in contact with you shortly. Please note, leave of absence for a holiday will not be approved in line with our attendance policy.

Child's Name *

Child's Class *

Reason for leave of absence

- ☐ Religious festival
- ☐ Appointment (please provide proof of appointment to the school office)
- ☐ Other

Please explain the reason for the leave of absence request.

First day of absence

Date returning to school

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR YOUR CHILD DURING TERM TIME

Applications can only be made for EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES that are unavoidable. Please see our attendance policy for clarification on the process around requesting absence.

I understand that taking an absence that is unauthorised can result in a fixed term penalty fine of £80.00 per child, per parent, rising to £160 if not paid within 21 days. This fine will increase if this is not the first incident of unauthorised term time leave.

Name(s) of pupil(s) for which leave of absence is being applied for

Name of Child	DOB	Years/Months	
Child 1			Class
Child 2			Class
Child 3			Class

Name and educational setting of any siblings who will be travelling but do not attend our school.

Name of Child	DOB	School/college they attend
Child 1		
Child 2		
Child 3		

Dates (inclusive for which leave of absence is being applied for)

From:

To:

How many school days do you require the pupil(s) to have leave of absence for?		
Destination		
On which date will the pupil(s) return to school?		
Please use the space below to justify the 'exceptional circumstances' for which the leave of absence is being requested:		
Address and contact number where you can be reached on whilst away:		
You are also required to provide copies of evidence of your travel plans (flights or booking details) and to support your justification of 'exceptional circumstances'. Please state below the evidence you are submitting.		
Full name of parent(s) making the application and who will be accompanying/responsible for the pupil whilst they are absent from school	Parental signature	Date
1.		
2.		
For office use only		
Decision	Code for register	Code
Unauthorised Or Authorised	G – Holiday not authorised	
	O – Unauthorised absence	
	C – Other authorised circumstances	
FPN	Is this application subject to referral to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice	Yes / No
School Action	• Previous holidays checked	
	• Supporting evidence recieved	
	• Headteacher to authorise	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education welfare to be informed	
Reason for refusing leave of absence:		



HELPFUL HINTS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Why am I receiving this?

Your child's attendance has dropped below 96% which is the minimum expectation for children in our school. They will continue to be monitored until they are above 96%.



Why is this important?

Being at school everyday allows your child to build on their friendships and feel a sense of belonging at school. It ensures they follow the carefully planned curriculum and there are no gaps in their learning.



Setting high expectations

By continually setting the expectation that your child comes to school everyday ensures they have the same view! This also includes booking holidays in the school holidays.

Positive language

When children are feeling poorly, it is easy to fall into negative language. By empathising with our children and then using school as a way of seeing friends and a distraction, they will see it as a positive place, even when under the weather!

External support

If you are worried that your child is often poorly or run down, school can support with a school nurse referral to help support you as a family.



We can support

We have a wonderful medical team and they are happy to do check ins with your child and administer calpol if needed.

Tier 1 – Formal Action Plan for below 88% attendance

Date/time of meeting:	
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Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	
Parent/carer name:	

Present at meeting:	
Current attendance:	

Previous actions – home and school	
This is the first action plan in place	
What is working well? (Interventions, attainment, engagement in school)	What needs to improve?

Actions agreed	
School	Home

Attendance target:	
Timescale for improvement (no more than 1 month):	

Would parents/carers benefit from an Early Help Assessment to support with improving school attendance? If no, please give details.	
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Date for review meeting:	
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Attendance - things to note



Gates

8.30 - Gates open

8.40 - Gates close (arrival after 8.40 will result in an L Code - late mark)

9am - Registers close (arrival after 9am will result in a U Code - unauthorised absence)

Punctuality

If your child regularly arrives late you will receive a phone call from someone in the attendance team to check in and see if there are any ways we can support you.

Your Child's attendance is reviewed on a regular basis

Below 96%

If your child's attendance falls below 96%, you will receive a leaflet of signposted support to improve attendance.

Below 90%

If your child's attendance falls below 90%, they are considered to be a persistent absentee and you will receive a letter to inform you attendance needs to improve.

Below 88%

If your child's attendance falls below 88% we will start our tiered approach to improve attendance with an attendance plan. You will then be required to provide proof for ALL absences including illness.

Below 50%

If your child's attendance falls below 50% they are considered to be Severely absent. At this point a referral will be submitted to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and the council will may become involved in managing their

Illness

Children are fine to come to school with mild coughs and colds. We can administer calpol if needed during the day.

If your child too unwell to attend, please inform school every day by 8.30. This should be done via your MCAS account or telephone message.

From the third day of illness, a member of the pastoral or attendance team may do a home welfare visit to check in with you and your child.

For 5 or more days of illness medical evidence must be provided or the absence may not be authorised.

Planned Absence

Please notify school of any planned absence via the leave of absence form on our Website, proof will be required.

Term time holidays can not be authorised and you may receive a fixed penalty notice (Fine) from MK Council