



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction

The school policy for Attendance and Punctuality was developed and agreed by the whole staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body. The policy was reviewed, updated and ratified by the Governing Body.

Aims

- To comply with the legal requirements.
- To find out where the children are in terms of their individual attendance patterns throughout the year.
- To pinpoint and remedy any child's irregularities with attendance patterns.
- To provide information on which to base target setting for future attendance returns.
- To provide evidence and information for reporting to parents, the LEA and DCSF.
- To enable each child to benefit from high quality teaching and learning opportunities in every area of the curriculum.
- To aspire to have no child missing more than six per cent of the education they are entitled to.

Whole School Involvement

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

To be able to aspire to achieve our aims, more than one person is involved – class teachers, child, parents/carers, head teacher, Education Welfare Service (EWS), the school's attendance officer, school administration staff, Chair of Governors and the LA Admissions and Inclusions when appropriate.

Parent/Carers

We encourage parents to sign our 'Home/School Agreement' contracting regular attendance for their children and on time. Good attendance is rewarded with certificates on a termly basis. The importance of good attendance is explained to all parents who attend the pre-school meetings and is emphasised in the school brochure.

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking children on holiday during term time, when valuable teaching and learning time is lost.

If a child is taken on holiday or the school suspects that they have been taken on holiday during term time then parents/carers will be issued with a £60 Penalty Notice for each week that he or she is absent. This must be paid within 21 days; or an increased amount of £120 if paid within 28 days. Each parent of each child will be issued with a Penalty Notice to that effect. This change came into effect on September 1st 2013.

The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the 'parent' is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives sufficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude. Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the age of five when a child should attend school from the start of the term commencing on or after their fifth birthday.

The local authority has a number of legal powers it can use. These include school attendance orders, education supervision orders and penalty notices. Authorised local authority staff, police officers and head teachers can issue penalty notices. The penalty is £60 per child per parent/carer if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If you fail to pay a penalty fine, you will be prosecuted.

Since March 2001 a higher offence warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court. Prosecution can lead to a custodial sentence.

SIMS Attendance Module

The keeping of a register of attendance is a statutory legal requirement. At Ambleside Primary School this is done electronically. Electronic registration takes place twice a day: at the start of the morning session and afternoon sessions. This policy contains instructions on the completion of the registers and these must be followed precisely. The recommendations for using different codes to mark authorised, unauthorised and present marks should also be followed. Please refer to *appendix 1*, for a breakdown of the codes used in our school. Where a member of staff is in any doubt they should seek assistance from the school's attendance officer who may in turn obtain advice from the EWS.

On rare occasions a paper register is taken and then the school's attendance officer will transfer registration information onto the SIMS attendance module. This enables the school to meet the legal requirements for attendance and absence monitoring. Attendance statistics that have to be submitted to the LA and DCSF are calculated.

Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms produce the following reports which are analysed and acted upon:

- Four continuous broken weeks
- Continuous absence
- Percentage attendance
- School performance absence return
- Pupils' yearly attendance
- Persistent Lateness

Lateness

School operates three entrances at the beginning and end of the school day. The central pedestrian entrance on Minver Crescent is closed promptly at the start of school at 8:50 a.m. each day. The second entrance adjacent to Hilcot Road is closed at 8:50 a.m. to allow parents/ carers who drop pupils off at Nursery to leave. From that time onwards, all pupils arriving late have to enter the school grounds via the Main entrance. Registration closes at 8:50 a.m. A bell will be rung each morning to signify this. Any child arriving after that time will be recorded as late.

Pupils who arrive late must report to the school office after the register has closed and have their name recorded in the 'late book'.

Any children arriving at school 10 minutes or more after this time will be recorded as a U in the register. If a child receives more than 5 U codes within a 4 week period the parents/carers will be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

Late Book

The 'late book' records the date, time of arrival and reason for lateness. This is then transferred to the individual pupil's database on SIMs. If a child arrives at class after the register has been closed they should present to the class teacher a late card as proof of the fact that their arrival at school has been duly recorded at the main office. If the child arrives in class without a late card after the register has been taken, they should be sent to the main office to have their arrival recorded.

Punctuality is monitored continuously. If a child's punctuality is a cause for concern, the parent/carers will be notified by a letter. Please refer to appendix 5

After four weeks the situation is reviewed and if no significant improvement with regards to punctuality, a penalty notice will be issued.

Absences

When doing the register electronically absence is recorded using an N code. If the person taking the register is aware of why the child is absent then they are to right click and add a note as explanation. (In the case of paper registers the teacher must record this using 'O' written in black ink in the register.)

Phone Contact

The school operates 'first day contact' with parents/carers if no notification for absence has been received. This contact will either be through the 'Text messaging' service to mobile phone or a telephone call.

Authorisation of absence

The absence may only be marked as authorised once the attendance team is satisfied that this is the case. It is important to note that an absence is authorised by the school and not the decision of the parent/carer.

If a member of staff is concerned that an absence/pattern of absences is not justified, then this should be reported to the school's attendance officer, who may visit the family or request the EWS make a visit. Before such a referral is made the class teacher should try to establish why a pupil is absent. Even where a reason is offered for an absence, the class teacher may feel that the reason is unacceptable and the matter should be referred to the Head Teacher. Similarly, where a pupil is missing school regularly through illness it may be appropriate to refer the matter to the EWS, school nurse or other health professionals before the absence is authorised. The EWS may decide to make a visit on welfare grounds to discuss the level of attendance.

If an unauthorised absence has not had a valid reason given after the duration of four school weeks, then the mark is to remain unauthorised.

Categorising Absence

Children should only be away from school if they are ill or have a medical appointment.

It is not acceptable for children to be away from school for day trips, shopping, haircuts or purchasing school uniform and shoes. Please refer to *Appendix 1*, which details the codes, which the school uses consistently to categorise absence.

Holidays / Leave of Absence

Permission for holidays during term time will normally NOT be granted. In exceptional circumstances requests should be submitted on the Holiday / Planned Absence Form (see Appendix 3) detailing the circumstances in support of the request.

Should a child be absent from school on any dates which have not been granted permission or for which the school has no notification then a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Religious Observance

Ambleside Primary is a vibrant and diverse school that promotes respect for the faiths and values of all its pupils and families. There are many religions celebrated in our school and it is important that we recognise the diversity of the school population.

One day for each religious festival (no more than three days in any one academic year) will be counted as authorised absence. The Pupil Regulations 2006 state that absence for religious observance should be treated as authorised (absence) '**on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs**'. Additional days off for extended celebrations will be treated as unauthorised absence. Parents / carers should request permission for leave of absence by completing the relevant Holiday / Planned Absence form at least six weeks in advance.

Missing Children and Removal From Roll

If a child goes absent for a longer period than 2 weeks and the school has received no notification as to why, they will be referred to the Child Missing in Education Team and after a monitoring period they will be taken off the school roll and placed on the National missing child register.

Referring cases to the EWS

Attendance is monitored continually. Any child whose attendance falls below 90%, regardless of reason is brought to the attention of the EWS and discussed by the attendance team who will notify parents/carers by letter. Please refer to appendix 4. If a child's attendance falls to 85% or below, or patterns of absence raise suspicions or concerns, the parent/carer will receive a letter notifying them that absences will no longer be authorised without medical evidence being presented. Please refer to appendix 4a.

Reintegrating pupils who have been absent for long durations.

At Ambleside we find three main types of pupils that need reintegrating successfully back into education and school. These are:

- Children who have got to the age of six or seven years and never attended a school before
- Children who have had a lengthy period in hospital
- Children who have signs of school phobia
- Children who are returning to school after an exclusion
- Children who have changed schools as a result of a "managed move"

For all of the above an initial meeting is held with the Parent/Carers, Inclusion Leader & Manager, the school's Attendance Officer and the Head Teacher to discuss and agree a programme that will benefit the child. In exceptional circumstances a Home Education Tutor and Family doctor will be invited to attend the meeting. The agreed programme is put into place at the earliest convenience, with follow up meetings to discuss progress / worries.

Implementation of the Attendance Policy Setting Targets

Targets for attendance for the academic year are set within the 'APR' during the autumn term by the Chair of Governors, LA Advisor, EWS, Deputy Head Teacher and Head Teacher. These are realistic targets based upon the previous year's attendance figures. Any targets not successfully reached are analysed and discussed with governors.

Attendance is an agenda item that is monitored and discussed regularly at governors meetings. Discussions include patterns and trends for individual classes along with comparative data for other schools when available. In addition to this a section on attendance is written into the termly Head Teacher's report for Governors.

Attendance percentages for each class are shared with the whole staff within a Monday morning briefing session on a weekly basis.

Staff are given attendance breakdowns for every individual at the end of each half term for all pupils who have attended less than 85% and discuss with the head teacher any poor attendees.

An assembly is held every half term to celebrate children who have achieved 100% attendance during the previous half term.

Children, whose attendance is between 95-100% at the end of the half term, will receive a certificate. The teacher can also nominate a pupil for a certificate whose attendance has risen significantly (e.g. from 75% to 90%) but did not reach the 95% bench mark.

Children who achieve 100% attendance for the entire year are given a gift and a large A4 certificate

Both the class and head teacher thank pupils and their parent/carers who have made significant improvements in their attendance personally.

Please note that due to the catchment area, pupil mobility and Social Services involvement can affect in some circumstances the achievement of the target at the year-end.

Pupils' attendance patterns are reported to:

Parents

- On the front cover of the Annual written reports
- Twice yearly at parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring Terms
- Once at the informal parents' evening in the Summer Term
- Through on-going conversations with parents throughout the year to air concerns and praise increased attendance
- Attendance statistics are published in both the School Profile and the School Prospectus.

Staff

- Information is available for staff to monitor attendance on an immediate and long-term basis using a comprehensive list of reports from SIMs.
- Information is published weekly on the school website.
- Staff can request attendance data from the attendance officer at any time should they have concerns or worries.
- Staff can share Individual Attendance Certificates at Open Evenings.

Transfer Schools

- Passing on of common transfer forms
- National Curriculum assessment records
- Passing on annual written reports

LA AND DCSF

- Attendance returns

Roles and Responsibilities

Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher/Attendance officer

- To ensure legal requirements are being met with regard to attendance.
- To be responsible for the operational management of the attendance policy.
- To remind staff at the beginning of the academic year about the contents of this policy and correct procedures for completing registers.
- To discuss attendance at new intake events for parents and children who are admitted to the school part way through a term.
- To analyse authorised and unauthorised absence, class by class (*weekly basis and half term*) each half term.
- Reward the best attendees.
- Send letters home to parents/carers whose child/ren missed more than 10% of their educational entitlement during the previous half term or whose patterns of absence are a cause for concern.
- To meet with parents / carers of pupils whose children's attendance/absence is of concern by arranging in school meetings or undertaking home visits
- To follow up individual pupils, classes or year groups and analyse attendance data to identify trends, which can then enable the school to target their efforts.
- To discuss with class teachers any individuals who are not attending regularly.
- To contribute towards multi-agency meetings regarding specific pupils whose school attendance is of concern
- To support parents / carers with issues affecting school attendance

Governing Body

- To know about the content and implementation of attendance and punctuality policies within Ambleside Primary.
- Perform their duties as critical friends within governors' Pupils and Personnel meetings.

Administrative Staff / Attendance team

- Attendance is recorded electronically on the 'Sims Attendance module.'
- Monitor every individual's attendance for irregular patterns and absences.
- Generate appropriate reports which are discussed with the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, Class teachers and other staff. Which includes:
 - Weekly analysis of whole school attendance data
 - Percentage attendance for all pupils below 90% or causing concern
 - School performance absence return
- Make contact each day with parents/carers of pupils who have not arrived during the registration period.
- Amend data on receipt of reasons for absence.
- Issuing of attendance and punctuality related letters to parents/carers.

Class Teachers

To ensure that pupils attend school regularly it is important that class teachers monitor their register to detect any absence patterns that are emerging and report any concerns to the school's attendance officer.

- To ensure registers are completed in accordance with this policy.
- To provide a stimulating curriculum that ensures enjoyment and commitment to learning among children, making them want to come to school
- To challenge those children and parents/carers whose attendance is causing concern.
- Identify and reward those children who are actively trying to improve their attendance or maintain a good level of attendance.
- To discuss with the school's attendance officer any individuals who are not attending regularly.

Nursery staff

Nursery staff have an important role to play in establishing good practice from an early age. Swift intervention with parents will lead to improved attendance when the children reach statutory school age.

Please refer to the separate policy 'Admission to Nursery Policy.'

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Ambleside Primary School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

All staff have equal access and inclusive rights to their work regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability or ability. Ambleside Primary School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

Accessibility of policy documents

Parents and carers are welcome to ask for further information about any policy matter. Copies of all current School policies are available for parents and carers to read. A copy of each policy is displayed in the School lobby and all policies can also be consulted online via the School website at

www.amblesideprimaryschool.co.uk. The School will try to arrange for the translation or summary of a document when this is requested by a parent or carer whose first language is not English.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in the autumn term 2015.

Appendix Details:

Appendix 1: Codes used within paper registers

Appendix 2: Holiday/Planned absence Request form



Ambleside Primary School is an exempt charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales number 8246275. It has a registered office at Minver Crescent, Aspley, Nottingham NG8 5PN.

Appendix 1

Codes used within registers completed by teaching staff:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
/	Present a.m.
\	Present p.m.
0	Not present

Additional codes used with ICT Attendance Module on SIMS

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
/	Present a.m.
\	Present p.m.
C	Authorised circumstances
H	Annual family holiday
L	Late
M	Medical/Dental Appointment
V	Educational Visit off site
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances
U	Unauthorised late
#	Holiday for all



Appendix 2: Holiday/Planned Absence Request Form **HOLIDAY/PLANNED**
ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Before completing this form please note the following:-

- Approval of pre-arranged absence should be sought prior to placing any bookings as permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Head Teacher / Attendance Officer.
- Should the child not return to school on the specified date then a fixed penalty notice will be issued

To be completed by the Parent/Carer

I wish to apply for approval for my child to take a family holiday/pre-arranged absence during school term:

Full Name of Pupil: _____ Class: _____

Dates of intended absence: From: _____ To: _____

Date expected to return to school: _____

Reason for absence request (please specify) :

Signed: _____ Parent/Carer Name: _____ Date: _____

THIS FORM SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE ATTENDANCE COORDINATOR/SCHOOL OFFICE

Ambleside Primary School

Absence Request Form Response Slip (To be returned to Parents/Carers)

Name of Student: _____ Class: _____

Dates of intended absence: From: _____ To: _____

Approval Granted: Approval Refused: (See attached letter)

The Education Welfare Service will be notified of all unauthorised absences during this period.

Signature of Attendance Coordinator: _____ Date: _____



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The school has recently updated the Attendance and Punctuality Policy. Below is a summary of key points for your information.

The Law and Fixed Penalty Notices

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the 'parent' is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5 years old or above) receives efficient full-time education. If a parent/carer breaks this law then they may be issued with a fixed penalty.

Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) – The Facts

As an alternative to prosecution, authorised local authority staff, police officers and head teachers can issue penalty notices to parents of children who are not attending school regularly. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer for each child missing school rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days. Failure to pay a penalty fine will result in a prosecution.

Lateness

Lateness in attending school is an **unauthorised absence** if the pupil arrives after the registration period has ended. The doors open at 8:40am and registration commences at 8:45 a.m. Any child arriving after that time will be recorded as late.

A bell is rung each morning to signify the closure of registration. Any children arriving at school 10 minutes or more after this time will be recorded as a U (unauthorised) in the register. If a child receives more than 5 U codes within a 4 week period the parents/carers will be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

Absences

Absence may only be marked as authorised once the attendance team is satisfied that the reasons given are legitimate. It is important to note that **the decision to authorise an absence is made by the school and not the parent/carer.**

Children should only be absent from school if they are ill, have a medical appointment or have been granted a leave of absence by the attendance team. It is not acceptable, or legal, for children to be absent from school for any other reason.

Holidays/Planned absence

Due to changes in government legislation no permission for holidays during school will be granted and planned absences should be requested using the Holiday/Planned Absence Request Form, as permission will only be granted by the school in exceptional circumstances.

Should a child be absent from school on any dates which have not been granted by the school, for which the school has no notification or which exceed the allowed ten days, then a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Referring cases to the EWS (Education Welfare Service)

Attendance is monitored continually. Any child whose attendance falls below 90%, regardless of reason is brought to the attention of the EWS and discussed by the attendance team who will notify parents/carers by letter. If a child's attendance falls or patterns of absence raise suspicions or concerns, the parent/carer will receive a letter notifying them that absences will no longer be authorised without medical evidence being presented.

Phone Contact

The school operates 'first day contact' with parents/carers if no notification for absence has been received. This contact will either be through the 'Text messaging' service to mobile phone or a telephone call.

Notifying the school of an absence

Please contact the school as soon as possible on **0115 9003610** and leave a message if your child will be absent from school.

We understand that at times it can be difficult to achieve full attendance for your child. However it is important to remember it is your legal obligation to do so.

We would like to offer support if you are struggling with any matter relating to school attendance and our Attendance Manager Diana Boulton is available to discuss any issues which may be affecting your child's attendance. Please contact her at the school should you require her support.

Thank you for your continued support
Ambleside Primary school Governing Body



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