



## **School Attendance Policy**

**June 2019**

# Model School Attendance Policy

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## 1. Introduction

ASSET is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this and provide a consistent model policy for ASSET schools.

The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. Schools will ensure that all members of their community know of the policy and have access to it.

## 2. School's roles and responsibilities

All staff have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and safeguarding their pupils which includes timely recording and reporting of attendance and absence.

### Attendance Lead

There is a designated attendance lead who oversees and co-ordinates the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance. At Ilketshall, this is the Headteacher. The attendance lead will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The attendance lead will ensure that attendance is reported and monitored regularly. The attendance lead will ensure systems are in place that will lead to attendance issues being reported at an early stage and that support is put in place swiftly.

### Registration

- i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once at the start of the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for ensuring the completion of the attendance registers using the prescribed codes in **Appendix 1**.
- ii) The times for registration in the morning and afternoon are outlined in **Appendix 2**, 'Our School Day' including our 'late arrival window'. Pupils arriving within the 'late arrival window' will be marked with the code L. Any pupils arriving after this 'late arrival window' will be marked U.

### Categorising absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction is distinguishable.

We recognise the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and the safeguarding of children. If absence is frequent or continuous, and apart from where a child is clearly unwell, staff will challenge parents/carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

### Authorised absence

Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
  - (c) where the child has a medical appointment and parents/carers have been unable to obtain an appointment outside of school hours;
  - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
  - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
  - (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) from school and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
  - (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
  - (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement or passport renewals that must take place in another country) and **for a very limited period**.
  - (i) where there are highly restrictive reasons why parents and carers are unable to take leave in school holiday time and evidence is provided to this effect eg parent is terminally ill. This would be granted **extremely rarely and for a very limited period. Please note, unauthorised holidays may lead to a fixed penalty notice (appendix C).**

#### Unauthorised absence

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

#### Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

### 3. Collection and analysis of data

The attendance lead will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported on a regular basis. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and put in appropriate support for individuals.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DFE within the stipulated time frame when requested, attendance data is reported to the local governing body and is submitted to the trust for trust-wide data analysis and benchmarking.

### 4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at our school, is regularly discussed at assemblies and classes and is highlighted in communications with parents such as newsletters.

The attendance lead will ensure that staff members are trained in understanding the importance of high attendance and that every staff member has a role to play in this area. The attendance lead will monitor and support staff to ensure that all staff are entering and recording attendance correctly.

#### First-day calling

The School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence.

#### School Strategies to Tackle Absence

Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Support may be offered or put in place in order to improve a pupil's attendance.

#### Referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, Section 12* requires schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised). At our school, referrals to the EWO service may occur after 6 continuous sessions of absence (3 school days) or where schools have identified a set pattern of unauthorised absences totalling 6 sessions (for example consistently missing school on Fridays for three weeks running).

#### Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. Pupils who arrive after the register officially closes (see **appendix 2**) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and six unauthorised sessions may result in a fixed penalty notice.

Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register officially closes will be marked late (see **appendix 2** 'late arrival window').

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or pupils returning to school later in the day follow school procedures for signing themselves out of school and/or back in.

### Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. We take this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen through safeguarding procedures for exits and entrances in school. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the child will be considered as missing and parents will be informed. Other agencies may also be contacted as required.

## **5. Term time holidays**

**Anyone found to have taken an unauthorised term time holiday may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. (Appendix C).**

## **6. Extended leave of absence**

Any extended leave of absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher. The absence will be unauthorised unless exceptional reasons are given. If an extended leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation from the Headteacher, a pupil could be removed from the school roll.

## **7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child).

The school expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school every day, on time whilst striving for 100% attendance;
- not expect the school to agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school;
- notify the school on the first day of absence by phone
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, dressed according to our uniform guidelines, and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives that are impacting on their attendance. The school will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## **8. Pupils' responsibilities**

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

Pupils should attend school on time and ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

## **9. Local Governing Body Members' responsibilities**

The local governing body plays a key role in challenging and supporting the school in promoting and monitoring attendance as outlined in the ASSET education governor handbook.

Appendix A

**REGISTER CODES**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Appendix B

### Our School Day

	<b>Morning session</b>	<b>Afternoon session</b>
<b>Registers open</b>	<b>8.50 am</b>	<b>1.00 pm</b>
<b>Registers close</b>	<b>9 am</b>	<b>1.10 pm</b>
<b>Late arrival window</b>	<b>9.00-9.10 a.m</b>	<b>1.00-1.10pm</b>

## Appendix C

### Fixed Penalty Notice: (FPN)

**All schools must follow the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices.** The headteacher decides whether or not to issue a penalty notice. This decision will be in line with the ASSET Education Attendance Policy and the Suffolk Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

From the 1st September 2013, the Department for Education (DFE) amended the regulations surrounding holidays in term time. The DFE removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. These amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time and gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

With effect from 1 September 2014, the Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council has been issuing fixed penalty notice fines when:

- **6 unauthorised sessions occur (including unauthorised late marks): 1 session = a half day**
- **a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school**

Parents / carers will receive communication from the school / Education Welfare Officer (EWO) prior to a FPN being issued. This school values building relationships with parents and will endeavour to work in partnership with the home to improve attendance .

Currently the penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.

**If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days of the issue, the local authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent/carers in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure the child attends school regularly. Currently this may lead to a fine of up to £1000.**

Fixed Penalty Notices are paid online via the Suffolk County Council website.

## APPENDIX D: GUIDES FOR PARENTS and CHILDREN [Optional]

### 1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.50 **am** and the afternoon register at 1 **pm**.

### 2. What happens if my child is late?

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office. If a child's lateness gives cause for concern, a phone call and / or a letter will be sent home outlining the school's concerns, and the desire to avoid a situation where a penalty notice is issued. A meeting may be arranged with the Attendance Lead to discuss reasons / difficulties for lateness. If the lateness persists, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

**Penalty Notices may be issued for 6 unauthorised sessions. (1 session = a half day, morning or afternoon).**

### 3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

### 4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness - medically unfit for school. Absence for more than 3 consecutive days due to sickness or injury will require a doctor's certificate. The school may request a GP appointment card, a prescription (a photocopy may be taken by the school) or the medicine box/antibiotic bottle to verify the illness/medical reason for absence
- Emergency dental/medical appointment  
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Family bereavement
- Day of religious observance

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission in writing for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. **In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate or proof of illness.** If you are unsure as to send your child due to the type of illness, please refer to the guidelines as published by Public Health England September 2014.

### 5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, extended holidays abroad, shopping, birthdays or looking after siblings.

### 6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss support.

**7. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child has a reading record book which can be used for home-school communication. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

**8. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

The school Attendance Lead is ..... who is available to discuss any concerns or problems you may have.

In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The school may also refer you to an EWO who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

The EWO for this School is Tracey Vincent  
The Education Attendance Service is based at:

**Landmark House  
4, Egerton Road  
Ipswich  
IP1 5PF**

**Telephone Number: 01473 263503**

## ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY

### A GUIDE FOR PUPILS

#### ATTENDING REGULARLY AND ON TIME

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Ilketshall St Lawrence School. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;
- develop positive routines in my life
- get a job – employers like people who are reliable.

#### ABSENCES

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- Illness.
- Emergency dental/medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays).
- Family bereavement.
- Day of religious observance.

Looking after brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

#### NEED HELP?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. **TALK TO SOMEONE** – your class teacher, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

#### We celebrate good attendance by:-

- On a weekly basis, the class with the best attendance receive a certificate in Family Assembly
- On a half-termly basis, the class with the best attendance get to choose a fun activity to do for an afternoon session
- At the end of the school year, those children who have achieved 100% attendance throughout the year receive a £10 gift voucher .