Ashford School

Attendance Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Ashford School recognises that high attendance and punctuality are fundamental to academic success, personal development, and the wellbeing and safety of pupils. This policy sets out expectations, procedures and responsibilities of all pupils, parents, staff, and school leaders at Ashford School in relation to attendance.

Its purpose is to promote high levels of attendance and punctuality; to ensure every pupil has access to a full-time suitable education; to support families in meeting their legal obligations; to identify and address patterns of poor attendance early and to ensure there are clear procedures in place for monitoring and intervention.

Whilst all pupils have a right to full-time education and the school has high attendance expectations for all pupils, the school will account for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. In applying this policy, the school will consider its duties under the *Equality Act 2010* and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

This policy was developed having regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE) 2024
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Children Missing Education (DfE) 2024
- The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (DfE) 2022

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy:

- **Senior Attendance Champion** – The member of the senior leadership team designated to oversee all attendance-related matters and to champion and promote good attendance.
- **Persistent Absence** – Attendance below 90%.
- **Unauthorised Absence** – Absence that has not been authorised by the school in line with the processes set out below.
- **Parent** – In this document the term 'parent' is to refer to a parent, carer, guardian, or anyone with legal responsibility for the pupil.

3. Key contacts

School Reception: Parents must call 01233 625171 (Senior School) or 01233 620493 (Prep School) to report illness and any other unplanned absences.

Senior School Attendance Champion	John Curry	Assistant Head	01233 625171 curryj@ashfordschool.co.uk
Prep School Attendance Champion	Chris Neesham	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	01233 620493 neeshamc@ashfordschool.co.uk
Form Tutor	For initial support on attendance please contact the pupil's relevant Form Tutor who will have emailed you at the start of the academic year.		
Heads of Year	For additional support on attendance please contact the pupil's relevant Head of Year: Year 7 Mrs S Kirkham kirkhams@ashfordschool.co.uk Year 8 Miss J Dores doresj@ashfordschool.co.uk Year 9 Mr M Worrell worrellm@ashfordschool.co.uk Year 10 Miss K Stirling (maternity leave) stirlingk@ashfordschool.co.uk Year 10 Miss Diaz Bayon (maternity cover) diazbayonc@ashfordschool.co.uk Year 11 Ms I Martin martini@ashfordschool.co.uk Year 12 Mr A Stew stewa@ashfordschool.co.uk Year 13 Mr R Langford langfordr@ashfordschool.co.uk		
Prep Heads of Section	Pre-Prep – Mrs B Claridge claridgeb@ashfordschool.co.uk Lower Prep – Mrs C Harris Prior harrispriorc@ashfordschool.co.uk Upper Prep – Mrs P Leyden Leydenp@ashfordschool.co.uk		

4. Publication of this policy

This policy is published on the school website and will be sent to parents when pupils join the school and when it is updated. A reminder of this policy will be sent at the beginning of the school year to all parents.

5. Responsibilities

The Local Governing Body will:

- Have overarching responsibility for attendance at the school.
- Delegate responsibilities under this policy as described below.
- Monitor and review attendance on a termly basis.
- Ensure this policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed annually.
- Monitor attendance data regularly.
- Report termly attendance to the Local Governing Body and United Learning.
- Ensure that staff are appropriately trained.

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Oversee daily attendance systems.
- Oversee the maintenance of accurate attendance records.
- Oversee working with families, pastoral teams, and external agencies to address attendance concerns.
- Ensure that staff are familiar with attendance expectations and processes and apply them consistently.
- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the school's attendance strategies and processes.

Tutors/Class Teachers will:

- Complete morning and afternoon registration accurately.
- Monitor attendance daily.
- Refer unexplained absences to the Attendance Team to make same-day enquiries with parents.
- Raise concerns promptly with the Senior Attendance Champion, Assistant Head (Pastoral, Safeguarding & Wellbeing) and Head of Year.
- Deal with lateness consistently in line with the Behaviour Policy – Ashford School Code of Conduct.

Attendance Officer

- Follows up on the day regarding any unexplained absences.
- Liaises with the Head of Year and Senior Attendance Champion to ensure pupil absences are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Ensures attendance registers are completed accurately.

All staff will:

- Promote and regularly communicate the importance of good attendance for example through assemblies, PSHE lessons and conversations with pupils and parents.
- Support a school culture of high expectations in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Be aware that poor attendance may be a symptom of wider concerns about a child.
- Attend training and briefings relevant to attendance and adhere to this policy.

Parents are expected to:

- Be aware of their legal obligation to ensure that their child(ren) of compulsory school age receive an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.
- Observe the terms of the parent contract relating to conduct and attendance and be aware that failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the school about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.
- Ensure their child attends school daily and on time.
- Notify the school of any absence by 08:30 and provide a reason for it.
- Provide reasons and, if requested, evidence for absences (e.g., medical notes).
- Try to book routine dentist and other appointments outside the school day wherever possible.
- Use the procedure below under "Leave of absence" when seeking advance authorisation for absence.

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school daily and arrive on time.
- Be responsible for attending registration and lessons punctually.
- Remain on the school site during the school day except where attending an authorised activity.

6. Timings of school day and registration

- The school day begins at 08:30 and academic lessons end at 15:50, Activities end between 16:40 and 17:30; pupils are expected to be onsite or attending a school approved activity for the entire day, this period may be extended for the purpose of attending clubs etc.
- Morning registration is at 08:30; afternoon registration is at 13:50 (13:00 for Pre-Prep).
- Registers are taken electronically and completed within 10 minutes.
- If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed, they will be recorded as a late arrival.
- Late arrival after the register closes is marked as an unauthorised absence unless a valid reason is provided.
- Parents must notify the School Reception by 08:30 on the day of any unplanned absence.
- Where there is an unexplained absence, this will be referred to the Attendance Officer who will contact the parents to follow up on the same day.

7. Leave of absence

Absence due to illness	Absence can be notified via MSP (My School Portal) or parents can call School Reception (and email Form Tutor – Senior School only)
Medical and Dental appointments	Absence should be requested via MSP (My School Portal)
Specific educational events such as auditions, external exams, other visits	Absence should be requested via MSP (My School Portal)
Family events	Request to be sent to the Headmaster's Executive Assistant at headmaster@ashfordschool.co.uk If you have children in both the Prep and Senior School, only one request email will need to be sent to this address, but please state the names and year group of the children that the request relates to.
Holiday/Extended absence	Request to be sent to the Headmaster's Executive Assistant at headmaster@ashfordschool.co.uk If you have children in both the Prep and Senior School, only one request email will need to be sent to this address, but please state the names and year group of the children that the request relates to.

- Applications for authorised leave of absence during the school day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing to the Headmaster at headmaster@ashfordschool.co.uk.
- The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record, and the relevant background context behind the request.
- If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Assistant Head to determine the length of the time the pupil is or was permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an authorised absence.
- A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

8. The Attendance Register

Attendance and absences are recorded in the school Attendance Register using the relevant codes as set out in *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024* and the statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance (DfE) 2024*.

The Attendance Register will show whether a pupil is present, late, attending a place other than school or absent.

Absences are either:

- Authorised: e.g., illness, religious observance, medical appointments (evidence may be required).
- Unauthorised: e.g., holidays during term time without authorisation, absence without valid explanation.

The attendance register is kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy. Registers are legal records and , in line with current legislation, the School will preserve every entry in the attendance register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

Where amendments are made, the School will ensure the registers show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. As the attendance register is a record of the pupil's presence at the time it was taken, this register will only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry.

9. Monitoring and Intervention

Data from the Attendance Register is monitored to identify weekly attendance patterns and trends and to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. Identifying the pupils who need support will not just focus on persistent and severe absence, but the school will also seek to identify pupils who can be supported earlier before patterns become entrenched.

The school will work with parents and pupils and relevant school staff such as the SENCO, if appropriate, to identify particular barriers to attendance and to put in place appropriate support. Support will be tailored to the individual circumstances of the pupil. As a general guide, the following principles will be followed:

- Attendance below 95% triggers investigation and conversations with parents to identify barriers to attendance.
- Below 90% (persistent absence) or below 50% (serious absence) prompts a structured intervention plan; in such cases the school will work with the local authority to put in place targeted support which may include Early Help.
- Home visits may be conducted if absence is unexplained or safeguarding concerns are raised about a child who is not attending school.
- Attendance panels may be convened with families and senior leaders.

10. Additional needs

It is acknowledged that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school, for example, those with special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions, and/or social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. In such cases the school will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance and to put the right support in place.

Where appropriate, this will include considering what reasonable adjustments can be made to remove any potential in-school barriers to attendance. Where it is in the pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable can be considered part of a re-integration package to meet the child's needs and encourage regular attendance at school. This may be appropriate where a pupil is unable initially to attend full-time education. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and there will be pastoral support and other programmes running alongside the part-time timetable to encourage full-time attendance.

Where a pupil has an education, health, and care plan (EHCP) the school will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

The school may, in limited circumstances, with the agreement of parents, provide remote education to enable pupils who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the school site for a time-limited period. In such cases, the pupil will be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code.

11. Safeguarding and Attendance

All day pupils

Persistent or unusual absence patterns may be indicators of safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed if:

- A pupil is absent without explanation for more than two consecutive days.
- A pattern of concern arises.
- Follow up action in such cases may include a referral to children's social care.

Boarding Pupils (excluding Child Student/Student sponsored)

- Daily registration and evening roll calls are carried out and logged at Breakfast, Dinner and at 21:30.

- Parents of boarding pupils should ensure their child returns to their boarding accommodation by 17:45 on Sunday before the beginning of the school week.
- Unexplained absence from the boarding house will be immediately reported to the DSL and parents.

12. Data Collection and Reporting

- Attendance data is reported to the Local Governing Body and United Learning on a regular basis.
- Individual pupil attendance is included in school reports.
- The school is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. This includes:
    - New pupil and deletion returns outside of normal transition time.
    - Attendance returns (where a pupil has 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence)
    - Sickness returns (where a pupil is unable to attend because of sickness and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more in one school year)
- The School must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State and inspectorates.
- Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

13. Attendance Strategy

This policy supports the attendance strategy of Ashford School which aims to promote a culture of high attendance that supports pupil welfare and educational outcomes such that all pupils are accounted for and supported to access their full-time education entitlement. The School seeks to ensure that attendance is accurately recorded, monitored, and reported, and that our systems and processes are designed to help reduce absences and to identify and address patterns of persistent or severe absence, including for pupils with SEND or health needs, through early intervention and partnership with families.

14. EYFS Attendance Policy and Procedures

Bridge, The Stables, Nightingale and Prep nursery

Monitoring Absences

- The nursery will follow up on child absences in a timely and appropriate manner. A call to the parents/carers will be made in the morning, if no notifications of absence were shared with the nursery.
- All absence should be reported by the parents/carers to the nursery via MSP-My School Portal.
- Nursery will mark child's absence on daily register via application called Tapestry under holiday or sickness.
- If a child is absent for a prolonged period or without notification, the nursery will:
    - Contact the child's parents and/or carers.
    - If unsuccessful, contact the child's emergency contacts.

Assessment of Absence

- Staff will notify the management team daily of child's absence.

- Using Tapestry application, management team will run an attendance report.
- Using professional judgement, management team will determine whether an absence is considered prolonged.
- The nursery will consider:
- Patterns and trends in a child's absences.
- The child's personal circumstances.
- The vulnerability of the child and their family.
- The child's home life.

Safeguarding Concerns

If concerns arise regarding a child's welfare, the nursery will:

- Follow our safeguarding policy and report to Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Refer the matter to local children's social care services.
- Request a police welfare check, if necessary.

Parent and Carer Communication

- Parent/carer is responsible to contact the nursery through My School Portal to report absence if a child is unwell to attend the nursery, on holiday or having a day off.
- Parents are asked to inform us promptly of any planned or unforeseen absences. Should attendance consistently fall below 80%, we will review this with families to offer support in improving attendance and safeguarding funding eligibility.

Emergency Contact Information

- When a child is settling in, parents/carers will be asked to fill out the Contact details form with parents' picture, name and phone number. Where possible, the nursery will hold **at least two additional emergency contact numbers** for each child to ensure effective communication in case of absence.

15. Attendance for Sponsored Students with Child Student/Student Visa Status

As an independent school with UKVI Sponsorship responsibilities, to remain compliant with the terms of the licence, we must monitor the whereabouts, care arrangements and travel arrangements of all sponsored students.

Ashford School must report immediately to the Home Office any unauthorised absence of sponsored students of 10 contact points. Ashford School interprets this as being 10 consecutive days. As a school, we retain the right to withdraw sponsorship prior to this time period if necessary and dependent on circumstances.

All flights and travel must be booked within the school term dates (as listed on the school website). Any requests for early departure/late arrivals must be made to the Assistant Head. Absences must be authorised before travel plans can be made. Any deviation from this may impact the student's visa compliance.

Parents and educational guardians are responsible for booking all travel and for ensuring the safe travel of students from school and for their return to school. The UKVI requires Ashford School to hold a full record of the destination and travel plans for student visa holders at all times when they are not in school, as

Ashford School must ensure the safety and wellbeing of students during their time in the UK. This data will be held securely and in line with our Data Protection Policy.

Parents and guardians are expected to communicate all details of travel arrangements and accommodation during the school holidays including flight details, travel to and from school and the contact details of adults supporting with travel where required.

Parents and Guardians will be contacted 2 weeks in advance of the end of term/half term and must complete the details as requested via a link. Students studying at the school on a Child Student/Student visa are not permitted to stay outside of school during the term time unless by express agreement with the school and with written agreement by parents and/or guardians. Students cannot stay with parents in the UK during term time where the parent holds a short-term visa. Occasional weekend visits by parents are permitted in agreement with the school.

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. It will be monitored by the Senior Attendance Champion and updated and revised if necessary, during the annual cycle.

Template Owner	Operations Business Partner – Independent Schools
Department responsible	School Improvement Teams
United Learning Independent Schools/Academies/Both	United Learning Independent Schools
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Date Policy Authorised	November 2025
Policy Owner	Senior Attendance Champion
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