

Dear Parents/Carers

We are writing this letter to inform you about attendance expectations and to provide you with a clear outline about attendance procedures at Ashlawn School.

Good attendance at school is extremely important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised, both of which affect a student's attendance percentage to reflect the lost learning. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given. **Students with attendance of 95% or below will be expected to provide medical evidence for absence relating to illness/ injury such as a copy of a prescription or a medical appointment card etc.**

The following reasons are not authorised:

- Days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- Parents' work commitments or business trips
- Holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- Parental illness
- Passport appointments

Absence and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school you should inform us on the first day of absence before 8.30am via Edulink message or Voicemail, you will need to state the pupils name, your relationship to the student i.e. parent/carer etc. and the reason for absence. Parents/carers are required to call each day a student is absent. Ashlawn's attendance telephone number is 01788 532831– select option 1 for the absence line.

Medical Appointment

Where possible, appointments should be made out of school hours or in school holidays. However, we realise this is sometimes not possible. Students should come into school before and after appointments to ensure they miss as little lesson time as possible. If possible we ask that if these appointments are made during the school day please try and book the appointments between 10:30-12:30. Students should sign in at reception and sign out at Admin services.

Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g., bereavements, family problems, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs; they will be dealt with on an individual basis

Punctuality

Please ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present and ready for lesson 1; this starts at 8.45am each day. The attendance team together with Form tutors and Head of year will monitor lateness and punctuality. Sanctions and parental contact will be used as appropriate

Requests for absence in term-time

Permission from the Principal must be sought for all absences that occur during term-time. A 'request for leave of absence form' must be completed in advance of the absence taking place (these are available by clicking this link [Absence Request Form](#) or can be collected from Admin Services. Only the Principal can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. Under current regulations, schools cannot authorise any holidays taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school will require evidence of exceptional circumstances, which should be attached to the 'request for leave of absence form' and the judgement about what is exceptional will be made by the Principal.

What is considered as poor attendance?

Anything below 95% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance falls below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. In this school, we are aiming for every student to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%. We monitor attendance and provide termly reports on each student's attendance. Throughout the terms, we identify all those students whose attendance has fallen and issue a Stage letter and/or make a telephone call informing parents. We then monitor the student's attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of improving attendance. Failing to improve on this, this can lead to prosecution, which schools want to help families avoid.

If you have any Attendance queries throughout the academic year you can speak to the Attendance Officer, Welfare Lead, your child's Form Tutor, Head of Year or Key stage Lead. We are here to support you and your child whilst at Ashlawn. We want to make sure that we can support each student's education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

We look forward to seeing you in September and hope you enjoy a restful summer break

Yours Sincerely

Attendance Officer