

July 2025

### Dear Parents/Carers

Attendance at school is crucial in ensuring academic success, social and emotional development and a successful future career pathway. It is essential for fostering strong relationships with peers and developing essential life skills. Research shows consistent attendance significantly boosts academic achievement and long-term success. Missing even a few days impacts learning, attainment, and social development. Regular attendance is crucial for your child's future.

To support you and your child in achieving strong attendance to school, we hope to provide you with a clear outline of our procedures at Ashlawn School. As you know, some important changes were made to the law regarding attendance last year. Please take the time to read through the changes at the end of this letter.

We acknowledge that at times absence is unavoidable and therefore this letter explains the approach we are following to support you in this.

### Types of Absence

- Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised both negatively affect a pupil'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.
- Pupils 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 are some examples of unauthorised absences:

- 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

### What is considered poor attendance?

Anything below 95% is considered 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. At Ashlawn, we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%. 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 pupil'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 we want to help families avoid.





ATTENDANCE 100%	DAYS ABSENT	WEEKS ABSENT	LESSONS MISSED
90%	19	4	76

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

Please read through our Attendance Policy which you can find on the link below.

### **Attendance Policy**

We look forward to seeing you soon and hope you enjoy a restful summer break.

**Yours Sincerely** 

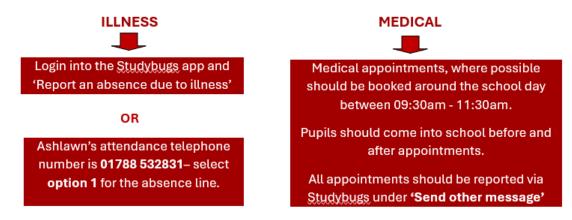
### The Attendance Team





### **HOW TO REPORT YOUR CHILD ABSENT**

If your child is unable to attend school, you must inform us on the <u>first</u> day of absence before 8.30am. This should include the reason for absence, pupil's name and your relationship to the pupil. You are required to call on <u>every</u> day of your child's absence.

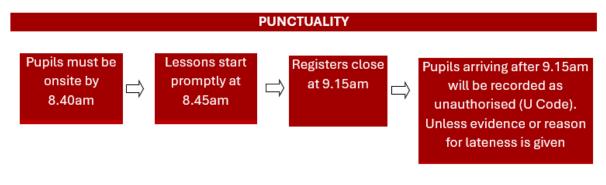


If you haven't already, please get the free Studybugs app, or register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell us whenever your child's ill and unable to attend school.

Get the app or register now

### REQUESTING A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Permission from the Principal must be sought for <u>all</u> other absences that occur during term-time. A 'request for leave of absence form' must be completed in <u>advance</u> of the absence taking place (these are available by clicking this link <u>Absence Request Form</u> or can be collected from Reception). Only the Principal can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. Under current regulations, schools <u>cannot</u> authorise any holidays taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Schools 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.







### LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

### **Updated information for parents**

The Supreme Court has clarified the law on unauthorised leave, including holidays, during term time (Platt v Isle of Wright 2017). The Supreme Court has made clear that attending school 'regularly' means that the children must attend school on every day that they are required to do so. As such, the parents of any child who is absent from school without authorisation for any length of time are likely to be considered as committing an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996.

The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.

When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.

It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is the parents' responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent ie the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence.

Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.





All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service, part of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.

The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence taken from September 2024 will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.

- Penalty Notices are issued to <u>each parent of each absent child</u>, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means <u>each</u> parent will receive 2 invoices 4 in total).
  - <u>First Leave of Absence offence:</u> The Penalty Notice amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
  - Second Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
  - Payment plans will not be offered and/or payments received outside of the 28 day period will not be accepted. Where a penalty notice expires unpaid the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider criminal prosecution.
  - Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): A penalty notices will be not be issued and the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Your child's progress academically as well as socially is our shared priority.







with families to listen, understand & support to remove barriers. Where needed, we will all. We will assess data to identify absence trends & use preventative discussions/meetings In line with the DfE Statutory Guidance (in force from 19th August 2024) we offer a supportive, stepped, attendance approach. We will offer a welcoming ethos with high expectations for formalise support to nurture improvement with Attendance Contracts & as a last resort we will consider intensifying support &/or enforce legal sanctions.

STEP 5 - Legal Action

- No Improvement

Prosecution) MAY be requested from

**Concerns Remain** 

STEP 4 - Warnings

Legal action (Penalty Notice or

taken, or if overall absence continues

Formal Warning' if AC has failed, or a Where STEP 2 or STEP 3 support has been unsuccessful &/or declined, a

Notice to Improve' Letter if no AC reinforce the need for immediate such as an Education Supervision

appropriate, will be issued to

Unauthorised Term Time Absence is

the Local Authority (LA) if



## STEP 1 - Identify, Assess & Prevent

Home Visits to meet our safeguarding duties as required conversations is where absence is at risk of reaching the relationship building with children & families to prevent absence patterns to inform our conversations with you actions involve promoting attendance positively, using praise & incentives, swift absence follow up, email &/or unrequested 'Term Time Exceptional Absence' & doing new National Threshold (10 sessions (10 half days/5 days) within a 10 week rolling period). Other daily absence. This involves monitoring data trends & letter communication to raise your awareness of (& your child where age allows). The trigger for Our daily actions & processes aim to promote emerging concerns, processing requested or

### STEP 3 - Formalised Support

We move to this step if the National

Absence Support

STEP 2 - Early

will be set & reviewed regularly. Medical &/or this point if required to work collaboratively other information will be actively sought at support. This is a 3-6 month nurturing plan escalation. Achievable & individual targets alongside other meetings e.g., TAF meeting Where absence continues & initial support with you & other agencies. An AC can run Contract (AC) will be offered to formalise needs to be increased an Attendance of improvement to prevent further

> &/or meetings to create a supportive reasonable adjustments are needed.

action plan. An Early Help

This will be done using discussions

Assessment (EHA) may be required

offered to identify if early support or

prevent further absence occurring.

Discussions & meetings will be

(authorised or unauthorised) to

Threshold for absence is met

# PENALTY NOTICES & LEGAL ACTION

with 'Severe Absence' (less than 50%)

should be considered to obtain

to Children's Social Care for children

Statutory Guidance States a Referral

improvement. A Family Court Order

CONTRACT

Order will also be considered as an

alternative to prosecution.

despite STEPS 1-4 being attempted. to occur & reaches or exceeds the

National Threshold for absence

2nd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) = Fine of £160 more) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. paid within 21 days fine is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. <u>Irregular Attendance</u> (10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence or **1st Offence** (after 19th August 2024) of <u>Term Time Leave</u> &/or per parent, per child payable within 28 days, no reduction

Court under \$444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act. If found guilty, a 3rd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) NO PENALTY NOTICE considered. The case will be presented to Magistrates' Convictions for s444(1a) offences will show on DBS record. fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be issued

Please talk to us about how

along with a Team Around the Family

for some support to be accessed

Proud to be part of the **Transforming Lives Educational Trust**