



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction

This policy was developed and agreed by the Pupils & Personnel sub-committee of the Governing Body and has the full agreement of the whole staff, governing body and Education Welfare Officer assigned to our school. The Governing Body reviewed the existing policy created in 2006 and ratified the new one at the autumn term full governing body meeting 2009, with a further amendment at the Spring term P&P sub-committee meeting 2010.

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 percent 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 Officer (EWO), School Administration staff, Attendance governor, Chair of Governors and the LA Admissions and Inclusions when appropriate.

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 efficient 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.

If it appears that a child is not receiving a suitable education, then under Section 437 of the Education Act, the LEA/school MUST begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order.

Since March 2001 a higher offence warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court. Prosecution under section 444 can lead to a custodial sentence.

Registers

Registers are a statutory legal document, which must be completed accurately by a member of the teaching staff. Attendance registers are taken 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 Deputy / Head Teacher who may in turn obtain advice from the EWO.

Absences

Where a pupil is absent, the teacher must record this using 'O' written in black ink in the register.

Authorisation of absence

The absence may only be 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 are not justified, then this should be reported to the Deputy / Head Teacher, who may request the EWO to visit the family. 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 EWO before the absence is authorised. The EWO 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

Only ten days (two weeks) may be taken for a family holiday during school time in any academic year. Approval of these days should be sought before a holiday is booked Appendix 2, as permission may not be granted by the school, unless the pupil's attendance in the previous six months is over 90%. Approval may not be granted to students in Years 2 & 6 who are involved in during SAT's examinations. Please see appendix 3

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 under Section 444a of the Education Act 1996.

If a holiday/leave of absence is requested that is longer than the statutory ten days parents/carers need to be aware that a fixed penalty notice will be issued should the child be absent on any period that has not been granted by the school. If parents/carers are still intending for their child to take the holiday/leave of absence, despite it not being granted they can consider whether or not they wish to take their child off role, therefore avoiding receiving a fixed penalty notice. However, should the child be taken off role the parent/carer will then have to apply to the local authority's admissions and exclusions department in order to have a school place granted. Please note this does not guarantee the child being admitted back to Ambleside Primary School, as it is a popular school and many of the year groups have waiting lists.

Missing Children

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 taken off the school role and placed on the National missing child register.

Referring cases to the EWO

Any child, who has four continuous broken weeks, needs to have a referral form completed straightaway to be passed onto the EWO. When referral forms are completed, school keeps the yellow copy as a record and the pink and white sheets are passed onto the EWO.

Attendance is monitored on a monthly basis. From the second half of the autumn term onwards, any child whose attendance falls below 85%, regardless of reason is brought to the attention of the EWO and discussed by the attendance team who will notify parents/carers by letter. Please refer to appendix 4. If child's attendance falls to 80% or below they will receive a further letter notifying them that absences will no longer be authorised without medical evidence being presented. Please refer to appendix 4a

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.

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 and
- Children who have signs of school phobia

For all of the above an initial meeting is held with the Parent/carers, EWO and 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.

Lateness

School operates three entrances at the beginning and end of the school day. The central pedestrian entrance is closed promptly at the start of school at 8:45 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.

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 by the attendance team on a regular basis. If a child's punctuality is a cause for concern, the parent/carer 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 under section 444a of the education act. See appendix 6

Early Bird Weeks are held within the academic year, to raise the profile of the importance of children arriving promptly for school. Children who attend the entire week without a late make are given a reward certificate.

SMART Cards

There are strong links between good attendance and good attainment at school. As part of our drive to raise standards at Ambleside Primary we have produced a smart card for you to share with your child. The card gives you information on timings of the school day and our new phone number in case you need to contact the school on the front. On the reverse are suggested ways to help your child do well at school. We hope you will find it useful and easy to store.

SIMS Attendance Module

Administrative staff 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 Prospectus analysis
- School performance absence return
- Pupils yearly attendance
- Persistent Lateness

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, EWO, 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 within the Pupils and Personnel Governors sub-committee that is monitored and discussed regularly. 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 report for Governors.

Attendance percentages for each class are shared with the whole staff within a Monday morning briefing session half termly.

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 90-100% 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 (i.e. from 70% to 87%) significantly but did not reach the 90% bench mark for one. Children who achieve 100% attendance for the entire year are given a gift and a large A4 certificate. The EWO is invited to this assembly to give the awards out.

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.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, 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.

Pupil's 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 ongoing 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.

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

- 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, 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.
- 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 meet fortnightly with the EWO to discuss any attendance issues which have arisen.
- To discuss with class teachers any individuals who are not attending regularly.

Governing Body

- To know about the assessment procedures within Ambleside Primary.
- Have a designated Governor responsible for monitoring and support the school with attendance.
- Perform their duties as critical friends within governors P&P meetings.

Administrative Staff

- Attendance is recorded electronically on the 'Sims Attendance module.'
- Every individual's attendance is monitored for irregular patterns and absences.
- Meet regularly with the attendance team.
- Generate
 - Every four weeks the following reports are printed off for the Deputy Head Teacher:
 - Four continuous broken weeks
 - Continuous absence
 - Persistent lateness trends
 - At the end of each half term
 - Percentage attendance for below 85%
 - School Prospectus analysis
 - School performance absence return
 - End of the first half of the summer term
 - Students yearly attendance
- 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 Head Teacher.
- To ensure registers are completed in accordance with this policy.
- Record verbal messages from parent/carers on the sheet enclosed within their register packs.
- To work to raise the level of enjoyment and commitment to learning among children, making them want to come to school.
- To discuss with the Head Teacher 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.

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 half 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. It is made very clear that a child may be granted leave of absence from school to enable him/her to go away on holiday for up to only ten school days in any school academic year.

Parents who arrive late, must report to the school office after 8:45 a.m. and have their child's name recorded in the 'late book.'

Review

This policy will be reviewed in the autumn term 2013.

Appendix Details:

- Appendix 1: Codes used within paper registers
- Appendix 2: Holiday Request form
- Appendix 3: Holiday Refusal letter
- Appendix 4: Attendance below 85% letter
- Appendix 4a: Attendance below 80% letter
- Appendix 5: Lateness letter 1
- Appendix 6: Lateness letter 2
- Appendix 7: Smart Card letter
- Appendix 8: Request for absence authorisation letter.
- Appendix 9: Multiple absence letter.
- Appendix 10: Good/Improved Attendance Letter.

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
@	Late
M	Medical/Dental Appointment
V	Educational Visit off site
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances
#	Holiday for all

HOLIDAY REQUEST FORM

Before completing this form please note the following:-

- Only 10 days (2 weeks) may be taken for a family holiday during school time in any academic year
- Approval of these days should be sought before a holiday is booked, as permission may not be granted by the school, unless the pupil's attendance in the previous six months is over 90%
- Should the child not return to school on the next school day that immediately follows the agreed holiday period then a fixed penalty notice will be issued.
- Approval may not be granted to students in Years 2 & 6 who are involved in SAT's examinations

To be completed by the Parent/Carer

I wish to apply for approval for my child to take a family holiday during school term:

Full Name of Pupil: _____ Class: _____

Dates of intended holiday: From: _____ To: _____

Signed: _____ Parent/Carer Date: _____

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

Ambleside Primary School

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

Name of Student: _____ Class: _____

Dates of intended holiday: From: _____ To: _____

Approval Granted: Approval Refused: (See attached letter)

Reason: _____

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

Signature of Attendance Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: Holiday Refusal letter

Parent/Carer of

Date

Dear

Due to the poor level of attendance (please see attached attendance certificate) we will not authorise holiday for the following dates to inc. Your child's absence will be officially recorded as unauthorised during this period.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact school and arrange an appointment with the Attendance Co-Ordinator Mr Noble.

Should your child be absent from school on any of these dates, then a Penalty Notice will be issued under Section 444a of the Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Hannon
Head Teacher

Appendix 4: Attendance below 85% letter

Parent/Carer of

Date

Dear

I am writing to you regarding our concerns for your child's attendance. Since September 2009 the attendance of stands at%. days missed out of a possible (please see the attendance certificate attached).

We will continue to monitor the attendance of and if it drops further a decision will be made regarding whether or not the school will authorise absence without presentation of medical evidence.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Attendance Co-ordinator, Mr Noble if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Hannon
Head Teacher

Appendix 4a: Attendance below 80% letter

Parent/Carer of

Date

Dear

I am writing to you regarding our concerns for your child's attendance. Since September 2009 the attendance of stands at%. days missed out of a possible

Due to level of attendance, we shall be referring this matter to the Education Welfare Officer, Tina Stuart. If you wish to speak to her in person, she can be contacted on 9003613.

To be able to authorise any future absences we will now require medical evidence i.e.

- Appointment Card with child's name
- Hospital Letter
- Written prescription
- Doctor's note

Please do not hesitate to contact the Attendance Co-Ordinator, Mr Noble if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Hannon
Head Teacher

Appendix 5: Lateness letter 1

Date

Address

Dear (Parents Name)

We are aware that (Childs Name) has been regularly arriving late to school. (Please see attached attendance certificate).

Attendance and punctuality is a very high priority at Ambleside Primary School. It is vital that your child arrives in good time for school. Regularly arriving late not only disrupts the teacher and pupils, it also causes embarrassment for your child.

Please ensure that your child arrives at school for 8.40 a.m. so that they can be registered by their class teacher and receive an attendance mark when the register is taken at 8:45 a.m. If your child continues to arrive after the register has closed you may be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

We will be closely monitoring the punctuality of your child over the next 4 weeks and reviewing the situation at the end of this period.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Hannon
Head Teacher

Appendix 6: Lateness letter 2

Date

Address

Dear (Parents Name)

With reference to my letter dated I am writing to you once again regarding (childs name) continual lateness.

The Education Act 1996 states that it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so results in you, the parent, committing an offence.

To date (childs name) has been late on sessions in which Sessions have been recorded as unauthorised absences. (Please see attached copy of your childs attendance certificate).

As there has been no significant improvement, Education Welfare are now aware of this and a Penalty Notice will be issued under Section 444a of the Education Act.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Hannon
Head Teacher

Appendix 7: Smart Card letter

November 2006

Dear Parent/Carers,

Pupils' attendance was one of the elements OFSTED has identified as an area that could be improved.

All pupils of school age must, by law, attend school regularly. Absence is looked at for both unauthorised and authorised absence. If your child misses more than 10% of school time, this is deemed as unsatisfactory. The number of days attended for the year for your child is written on the front of your child's annual report, which is sent out in July.

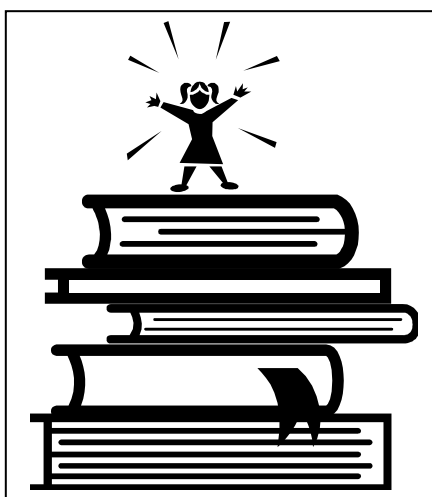
A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning whether is a number of random days missed or a week. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, but they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that, after they return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which we, and you, must seek to avoid. However, please don't send your child to school if they are ill.

There are strong links between good attendance and good attainment at school. As part of our drive to raise standards at Ambleside Primary we have produced a smart card for you to share with your child. The card gives you information on timings of the school day and our new phone number in case you need to contact the school on the front. On the reverse are suggested ways to help your child do well at school. We hope you will find it useful and easy to store.

Help us to help your child do well at school by good attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Hannon
Head Teacher.



Appendix 8: Request for absence authorisation letter.

Dear

_____ has been absent since _____ and I have received no communication from you as to the reason for his absence. As you know our home/school agreement requires you to inform the school if your child is likely to have an extended absence.

I would be very grateful if you could phone the school office at your earliest convenience, with regard to _____ absence or alternatively complete the slip below and return it to school.

If I do not hear from you within the next three days I will inform the LA Education Welfare Service about _____ extended absence.

Yours sincerely,

KL. Hannon
Head Teacher

Child's name

Class

_____ current absence is due to _____

Signed

Please return to the school address above.

Appendix 9: Multiple absence letter.

Dear

As a school we regard attendance as critical to pupil progress and in recent years we have invested a great deal of time and effort into improving our pupils' attendance. One aspect we consider important is prompt communication between home and school when your child is unavoidably absent.

Unfortunately _____ has a number of unexplained absences, which are more than a week old. It is school policy that all absences must be covered by a note or verbal explanation from the parent /carer as soon as their child returns to school.

The tear off slip below itemises the absences for which we have no explanation. I would be grateful if you could check them carefully and return the slip, via your child, as soon as possible so that I can ensure _____ does not have any unauthorised absences on her record.

Yours sincerely,

KL. Hannon
Head Teacher

Sherlock Holmes

Class 2

Tuesday	02/09/04 a.m. -	Wednesday	03/09/04 p.m.
Monday	08/09/04 a.m. -	Tuesday	09/09/2004 p.m.
Friday	10/10/2004 a.m. -	Friday	17/10/2004 p.m.

The absences itemised above were due to

Signed

Please return to the school address above.

Appendix 10: Good/Improved Attendance Letter.

Dear

As you know, pupils' attendance is an area, which we are monitoring very closely as a school.

Each class teacher has a summary for the number of sessions your child attended during the last half term. I am pleased to write that your child's attendance was great, thank you for your effort in ensuring your child came to school regularly.

A pupils' absence during term time seriously disrupts and affects their learning whether it is a number of random days missed or a week. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, but they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that, after they return.

There is a consequent very high risk of underachievement, which we, and you, must seek to avoid.

Please continue to help us, to help your child do well at school, by maintaining good attendance.

Yours sincerely,

KL Hannon
Head Teacher

T. Stewart
EWO