



2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017

Dear Parent / Carer,

## Absence from School

At Ashley Junior School we want every child to achieve all they can. One way in which you can help your child to do this is to ensure they attend school every day. As a school we have a legal responsibility to educate your child. As a parent you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school is an offence by law.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Our Attendance Policy clearly outlines our expectations and the requirements under the Education (pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2013. The regulations make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless '**exceptional circumstances**' exist. The fundamental principles for defining '**exceptional**' are **rare, significant, unavoidable and short**. By 'unavoidable' it means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

School absence falls into two categories; **authorised**, those which the school can give you permission for and **unauthorised**, those which we will not. Some examples of absences which the school is unlikely to authorise include:

- Family holiday
- Sickness of a parent/carer
- Inadequate clothing for school
- Problems with transport
- Non urgent medical treatment
- Days off for birthdays
- Refusal to come into school

Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school is an offence by law.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment **when attendance falls below 95%**. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, inform you that your child is on the 'at risk' register and their attendance will be monitored by the Attendance Officer (Mrs. Cheesman) in school.



If your child misses 10% (3 weeks / sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**.

Most childhood sickness that prevents school attendance would be classed as authorised absence. However, if your child is frequently absent from school due to sickness we will ask for medical evidence.

Punctuality is very important. If your child is late to school it can be very disruptive to the rest of the class as well as extremely unsettling for your child leading to feelings of anxiety. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action**.

Both poor attendance and lateness will lead to the school taking action which may include serving a penalty notice. We do however want to work with you to ensure the best for your child. We will:

- Celebrate improvements in attendance
- Keep you informed of attendance through the weekly newsletter
- Report to you on your child's attendance through the termly reports
- Contact you if we have concerns about your child's attendance or punctuality
- Support you and your child to ensure good attendance and punctuality

The attached flow diagram will, we hope, make the processes and joint responsibilities clear. For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from the school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidancefor-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

The Joint Arnewood Pyramid of Schools Admissions Policy is available on our website at: [www.ashleyjuniorschool.co.uk/usefuldocuments/policies](http://www.ashleyjuniorschool.co.uk/usefuldocuments/policies)

Yours sincerely,



**IAN RIX**  
**Headteacher**

