



School Attendance Information for Parents

At Ashley **Infant** and **Junior** Schools, we promote and expect excellent attendance to ensure all of the children in our care achieve their best outcomes.

We do understand there are times when attendance may not be possible, and this information leaflet aims to support parents/carers to take appropriate action to support regular attendance at school.



How to contact **Ashley Junior School** if your child is unable to attend

The office should be informed as soon as you know your child will not be attending school & no later than 9.30am.

Please call: 01425 616510 (an answer phone message can be left)

Or email: adminoffice@ajs.hants.sch.uk

If we receive no notification of absence by 9.30am, we will contact you to ascertain the reason.

Please remember to let the office know every day that your child will be absent.

What should I do if my child has a medical appointment or planned absence?



We ask that, where possible, appointments are made outside of school hours. We understand that this is not always possible. Please contact school in advance to inform us of a planned absence e.g. hospital appointment (proof required).

What should I do if my child is late to school?

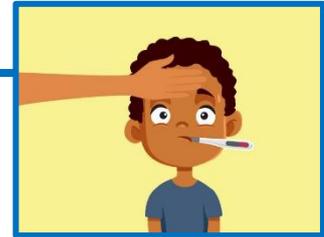
Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that pupil's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time. The **AJS** gates are open between 8.45 – 8.55am. If you arrive at school after 8.55am, the gates will be closed. Please go to the office and explain the reason for being late. Registers are taken at 9.00am & 1.10pm. Please note that arriving late after registration has closed (9.30am) will result in an unauthorised absence for that session.





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What absence will be authorised?



- Illness
- Dental/medical appointments (proof required)
- Wedding of a near relative
- Death of a near relative
- Religious observance (ceremony & travel time only)

The headteacher will consider any other 'exceptional circumstance' on its own individual circumstance.

Your child can attend school with minor illnesses such as toothache, headache, tummy ache, cold symptoms, a cough or sore throat. With parental permission we are able to administer liquid paracetamol.

Your child should be off school for 48 hours following the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea (unless this is a known medical condition or a side effect of medication).

Please note, [AJS](#) cannot routinely authorise absence where there are attendance concerns.

What do I do if my child has a mental health or physical condition which impacts their attendance?



If your child has a medical condition or less than 90% attendance, we may ask to see medical evidence that they are too unwell to attend school. Medical evidence may take many forms, depending upon the circumstances. Where a pupil has a specific medical condition which is clearly evidenced to the school (for example through an NHS paediatrician's letter or as detailed in the child's EHCP), this can be taken as evidence for ongoing absences rather than requiring the Parents/Carers to provide evidence after every absence. In cases where there is no confirmed underlying health condition, medical evidence can take whatever form the school deems as appropriate and might include: GP appointment card, prescription or the school's direct observation. Either way, if a Parent/Carer is asked to provide medical evidence, absences will not be authorised without such evidence.

However, if there are any doubts, the school will take advice.

If your child has a mental health condition, please follow the same process you would for a physical illness. The school will work with you to support your child to attend regularly.



What is persistent absence?

Attendance under 90% is considered persistent absence. Being absent for 10% of the year means that a child misses 0.5 days per week, which is 4 weeks of education in one school year. Throughout a child's education, this would mean they would miss one whole school year!

Attendance below 90% is monitored closely by our Attendance Lead and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Remember persistent absence is a safeguarding concern. If your child is absent for 10 consecutive days without explanation we will notify the Local Authority that your child is 'Missing in Education'.

What counts as unauthorised absence?

Here are some examples:

- Holidays
- Parent/carer or sibling illness
- A birthday treat
- Oversleeping due to a late night
- Looking after other children
- Home maintenance appointments



What about holidays in term time?

Holidays should not be taken in term time; family holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods. This applies to **all** families, **whether in Mainstream or Resourced Provision classes**, as per all schools nationally.

Remember, unauthorised holidays can result in a penalty notice/fine; **AJS** and **AIS** will not authorise any family holidays. Even if your holiday is shorter than 5 days (10 sessions), if your child has poor attendance or other incidents of unauthorised absence you may be liable for a fine, for example,

In the Spring term, Fred was late for 3 sessions, absent for one day due to a parent being unable to get him to school, then his parents took him on a term time holiday for 4 days. Because Fred missed more than 10 unauthorised sessions in 100 possible sessions (one session = a morning or afternoon, two sessions = all day) Fred's parents are now liable for a penalty notice of £80 per parent.





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If the school suspects you are on holiday when you tell us your child is ill, we can ask you to provide evidence of your holiday dates and issue a retrospective penalty notice. We encourage all parents to be honest and transparent about booking a holiday and complete a Leave of Absence request form so we know where your child is. Otherwise we may need to contact Children's Services and the police if we believe a child is missing or at risk.

When else might a penalty notice be issued?



The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- Where plans for reducing persistent absenteeism and severe absence have not been engaged with

Remember, in Education Law, parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age who are registered at a school.



What if my request for leave is an 'exceptional circumstance'?

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable & short.

The headteacher will assess each request on an individual basis and may ask to see additional evidence.



What will **AJS** do if absence is a concern?

Attendance 96% or above	Expect	Level of attendance promoted & expected
Attendance falls below 96%	Monitor	Attendance Lead begins monitoring attendance daily
Attendance continues to fall below 96%	Listen & Understand	Attendance Lead phones parents and has a discussion about barriers to attendance. Agree how to work together to resolve barriers/improve attendance.
Attendance falls below 90%	Facilitate support	Explore barriers inside & outside of school. Follow up discussion with parents arranged. Consider referral to outside agencies for voluntary relevant support. Advice sought from Hampshire Attendance Team where necessary.
Attendance falls below 80%	Formalise Support	Formal meeting with the Attendance Lead & parent. Barriers & interventions reviewed. Attendance plan written & implemented. Illness will not be authorised without medical evidence. Referral to Children's Services considered.
Attendance continues to fall below 80%	Enforce	If voluntary support not effective, statutory intervention triggered: penalty notice issued. Referral to Children's Services for severe absence (below 50%). Prosecution criteria reviewed.



Where can I find more information on attendance?

A more detailed explanation can be found in our Pyramid of Schools Attendance Policy and the Term Time Absence policy:

<https://www.ashleyjuniorschool.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=742&type=pdf>

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Department for Education)

:https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.



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