



Attendance Policy

Policy title:	Attendance Policy
Approved by:	FGB
Date approved:	July 2025
To be reviewed annually and any changes detailed.	

Policy review

Date of review	When / who carried out the review	Details of changes	Next steps

Statement of intent

Ashworth Nursery School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's **attendance champion** is **Mrs Jackson**, and can be contacted via office@ashworth.blackburn.sch.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance champion for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The Headteacher / Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Carrying out home visits (both pre-arranged and unannounced) to families where attendance is a concern.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

In addition to the above staff responsibilities, the office manager is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on SIMS.
- Responding to emails / text messages / phone messages regarding pupil absence.
- Informing the Headteacher / attendance champion about pupil absence.
- Following up on unexplained absences to ensure the correct code is used.
- Accompanying the Headteacher on attendance home visits.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Providing attendance reports to the headteacher / attendance champion.

- **Parents are responsible for:**
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details including where these change.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed (8:50am / 12:35pm)
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The morning session starts at **8:30am** and the afternoon session starts at **12:15pm**.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **8:45am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **8:50am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by **12:30pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in nursery by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **12:35pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

5. Absence procedures

Please see Appendix 1, 2 and 3 for further information.

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone by 8:45am / 12:30pm on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one session.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **8:50am/12:35pm** to report the absence, a member of the office team will contact the parent by telephone call.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **85%**, the attendance champion will arrange a formal meeting with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the Headteacher is able to remove the offer of a place.

6. Attendance register

The school uses SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

All staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each session.

This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided

- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account. The headteacher’s decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil’s previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Conduct weekly home visits to monitor the wellbeing of the pupil and maintain positive relationships.
- Signpost parents to the Home Learning section of the website.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Focused Key Person time / nurture intervention.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the headteacher / attendance champion will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of these interventions to ensure they remain effective.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending termly letters to parents.
 - Reminding parents of dips in pupil attendance.
 - Working with parents to overcome barriers to attendance.

The school will use attendance data, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Attendance stickers
- Postcards home
- 100% attendance week drives
- Text messages to parents
- Posts on social media and in the newsletters

10. Working with parents to improve attendance

Ashworth Nursery School will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to set out good routines and attitudes towards attendance in preparation for school – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, except in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the headteacher / attendance champion will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance champion will liaise with any relevant external agencies, e.g. children's social care and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

11. Persistent absence

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers

- Pupils who are eligible for EYPP
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the family and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

12. Monitoring and analysing absence

The headteacher / attendance champion will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The headteacher / attendance champion will feedback to staff to enable them to promote positive attendance with the pupils and their family.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the headteacher / attendance champion in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

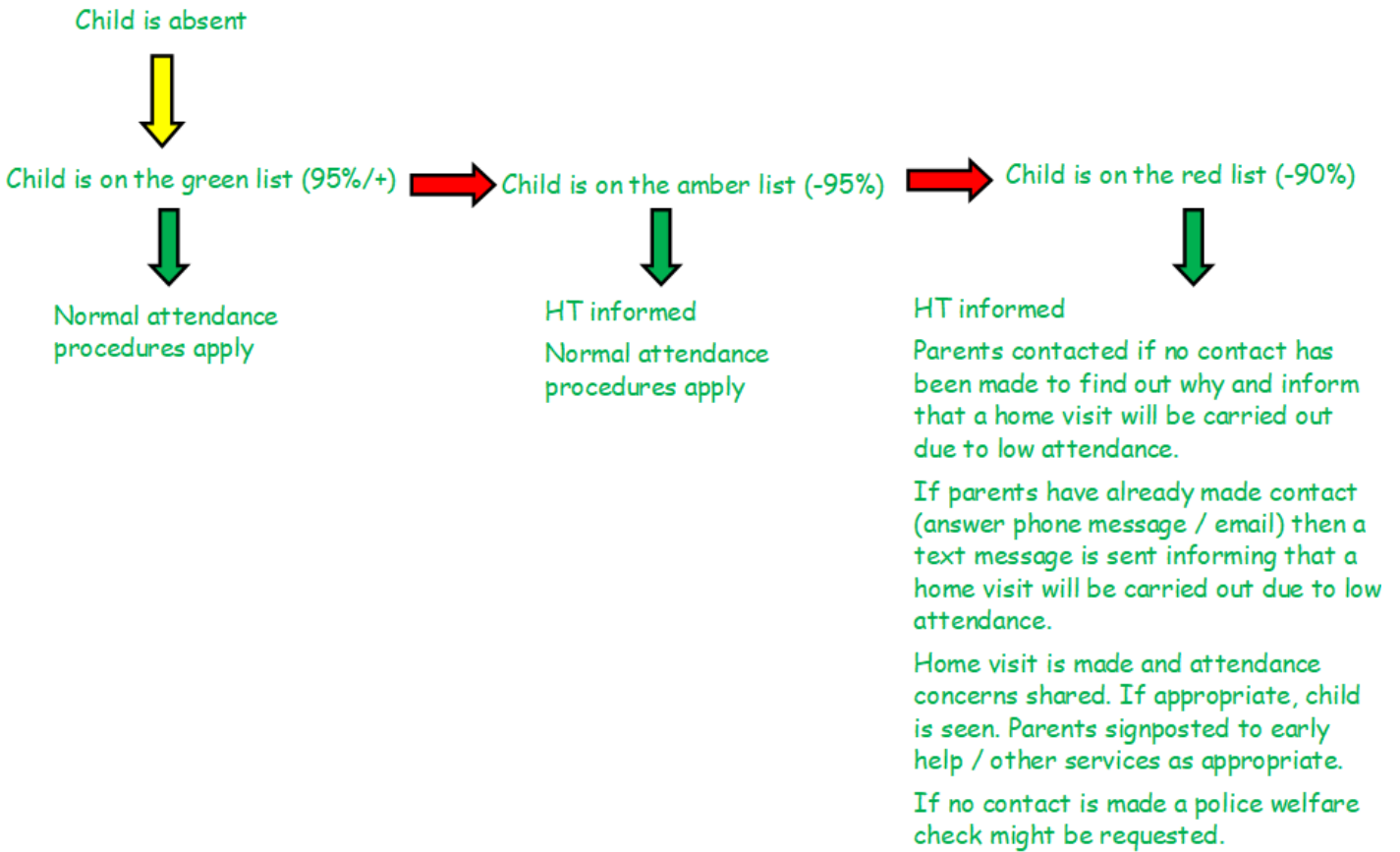
13. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **95 percent**.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance procedure at Ashworth Nursery School—RAG list



Normal attendance procedure at Ashworth Nursery School—all children

8am—8:45am /
12:00pm—12:30pm



8:30am—8:45am /
12:15pm—12:30pm



8:50am / 12:35pm



8:45am—9:00am /
12:30pm—12:45pm



The following day

Office staff to check emails / telephone messages for children who are going to be absent.

Log this on SIMs and add this information to the paper register

Headteacher stands on the gate to welcome pupils into Nursery.

Staff member stands at the door to take the register.

Register is closed. Any child arriving after this time is marked as late.

Phone call made to ascertain reason for absence to any family who have not contacted nursery. If no response, text message is sent asking for contact to be made. Relevant code is logged on CPOMs. If no response is received by 9:30am / 1:15pm inform the Headteacher. A further attempt to contact the family will be made during the session.

If no contact is made that day, contact should be made the following day to ascertain if the absence is authorised or not.

Every Friday

Check SIMS for any absences recorded as 'N' and chase up any outstanding reasons to fill in the correct code.

Home visit procedure at Ashworth Nursery School

A home visit will be carried out where there are concerns around attendance. These concerns are at the discretion of the Headteacher

Children with attendance below 90% will receive a home visit even if contact is made by parents.

Child open to Children's Social Care

Contact Social Worker / FSW to inform of the absence.

Home visit on absence day 3 if parents have made contact and the reason given is illness.

Home visit on day 1 if no contact is made or if the child is on the red attendance list.

All pupils

Step 1: In some circumstances, a pre-arranged time will be given but in most circumstances, the home visit will not be arranged and will happen unannounced.

Step 2: The Headteacher will carry out the home visit with one other member of staff. This will usually be a member of the office team but might be the Key Person.

Step 3: If no-one answers the door, an attendance visit note will be put through the door and a follow up visit will be attempted.

If someone answers, the reason for the visit will be explained and concerns shared about the child's attendance. If appropriate, the child will be seen to monitor their wellbeing. Parents might be signposted to agencies for further support or it might be necessary to open a CAF document.

Step 4: Headteacher will monitor the child's attendance for the next 5 school days and make a plan for next steps as appropriate.

