

Attendance policy

Alwyn Infant School

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. When children are not in school they are deprived of the educational opportunities which school has to offer them and they are at much greater risk of subsequently becoming socially excluded and disadvantaged.

Levels of attendance are a key indicator of a school's overall performance and all schools are now required to set annual attendance targets. (The Ofsted benchmark for a primary school's attendance is 95%.) Schools are also required not just to improve levels of overall attendance, but to reduce the numbers of persistent absentees (a persistent absentee being defined as a child whose attendance rate is below 90%).

As a school we aim to:

- Set our annual attendance target at 97%
- Maintain awareness of the importance of regular attendance

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular school attendees make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular school attendees find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular school attendees find learning more satisfying
- Regular school attendees have an easier transfer to their next school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.50 am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.50 am** and will be kept open until **9.20 am**. The register for the second session will be taken after lunchtime.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence (for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health) by **9.00 am** or as soon as practically possible. They are required to phone the school and leave a message on the answerphone.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Parents/carers may notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment by making a phone call or verbally advising the teacher or giving the teacher a note in advance.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

Morning registration is at 8.50am. This is the time the classroom doors are opened and you see your child into their classroom. It is important to be on time. If your child misses this short but vital session, their work may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and can be embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents/carers.

Arrival after the register has been taken but before registration closure time (9.20am) will be marked as late (L) and the child will be recorded as present.

Arrival after the close of registration (9.20am) will be marked as an absence and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence/Late, after registers close (U) unless the reason for lateness is as a result of medical/dental appointments and the absence will be recorded as authorised (M). Exceptional circumstances e.g. severe weather conditions, will result in an extension of this time.

We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any unreported absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If parents/carers report their child's absence in person to the school office, they will be asked to fill out an absence form (Appendix 1). This form will be given to the class teacher, who will update their register with the necessary code, and file it in the class absence folder.

If parents/carers report an absence by telephone, the office staff will complete a message slip and give it to the class teacher to update their register with the necessary code and file it in the class absence folder.

If parents/carers do not report their child's absence to the school office, the class teacher will be given a part completed slip (Appendix 1) from the office. The class Teaching Assistant will then ascertain the reason for the absence (in person or by telephone), complete the form and return it to the class teacher to update their register with the necessary code and file it in the class absence folder.

3.6 Reporting to parents

We will publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states: *Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*

This makes it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays are not regarded as exceptional circumstances. Should school staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine; the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised Absence is when the school has not received a 'Request for Exceptional Leave' form or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer.
- explanation offered is not in accordance with exceptional reasons for authorised absence (e.g. holiday, waiting on a delivery, going shopping or for a haircut, going for a family day out, because it is your child's birthday, sleeping in after a late night etc.).
- lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed and the explanation offered is not in accordance with exceptional reasons for authorised absence.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

4.3 Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is, therefore, deemed to be a persistent absentee if their attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

4.4 Informing Parents of their child's absence rate and Persistent Absence

Attendance rates will be reviewed at the end of a child's first ½ term in school and every half term thereafter.

- Attendance rates will be recorded.
- Action will be taken after the third half-term (February time) or earlier if appropriate/necessary.
- 90% – 100% attendance – no action taken by the school.
- 89% and below attendance – letter to be sent and information about what further action could be taken if the rate doesn't increase (Letter 1).
- 85% and below attendance – letter sent from the school with information of this percentage. It may be necessary for the parents to meet with the school headteacher/deputy headteacher/assistant headteacher to discuss concerns (Letter 2).

Exceptional circumstances will be treated appropriately and sensitively.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Strategies include:

- Attendance assembly every four weeks to remind the children of the importance of coming to school
- Classes with highest attendance have a non-uniform day
- Attendance letter on website
- High attenders receive certificates/stickers.

6. Attendance monitoring

The school administration officer and headteacher monitor pupil absence on a regular basis.

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, without contact from the parent/carer the class teacher will inform the office staff who will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level and arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance, in the class register, on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. If a child is absent for more than 2 days, without contact from the parent/carer, the class teacher will inform the office staff who will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for this.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record all absences on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the headteacher.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our safeguarding and child protection policy

Last reviewed on:	[Date]
Next review due by:	[Date]