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**Alvaston Infant & Nursery School**

**Attendance Policy**

## Date policy written – Sept 23

## Date policy reviewed – Sept 24

## This policy has been ratified by the Headteacher / Governing Body and a signed copy is in the school office.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Review date** | **By whom** | **Summary of changes made** | **Date implemented** | **Date ratified** |
| Sept 2020 | MA | **Updates re CPOMS / Safeguarding Policy** | Sept 2020 |  |
| Sept 21 | MA | **Updates regarding new systems implemented – red group, amber group processes and weekly meetings / updates with YGLs. Home visits added, counting children after registers, elective home education** | Sept 21 |  |
| July 2022 | CM | **Attendance criteria added and formal warning / nursery places withdrawn if attendance is poor.**  **Removal of ‘Hero the Hare’ from ‘Attendance in the Curriculum’.**  **Addition of ‘Strategies for Tackling Persistent Absence’**  **Further clarification of strategies in ‘Monitoring and Reporting on Attenance’.**  **Replacement of previous Appendix A with new Appendix A - Attendance: Intervention Escalation Plan’.**  **Inclusion of ‘Nursery Attendance Letter’ in appendices** | July 2022 |  |
| Dec 2022 | MA | **Half termly attendance meetings and appendix added** | Dec 22 |  |
| April 23 | MA | **Inserted statement on appendix c (amber grp) re medical evidence – meeting clarification.** |  |  |
| Sept 23  Sept 23 | MA  JH | **Changes to red and amber group processes, included working together to improve attendance processes, added in comparison with national average and triad of local infant schools, changes to register processes and printing times, removal of COVID processes**  **Registered- updated time of registers being completed to 9:15am (from 9am).** |  |  |

# Alvaston Infant and Nursery School

**Attendance Policy**

**Principles**

At Alvaston Infant and Nursery School, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are vital for success and enable children to establish positive life habits. We aim to work with all of our families and children and expect high standards of attendance so that the culture is that pupils and parents want their child to be in school every day, regardless of any barriers that they have. We aim to always try to understand barriers and in order to overcome them, we listen and understand, facilitate and support and offer any formal support, if this is needed. We have seen a direct correlation between excellent attendance and positive outcomes for children (socially and academically) and therefore will try to pursue this for every child.

The school has a positive and proactive ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality. In addition, we value our partnership with parents and we aim to provide a cohesive, robust approach to tackling attendance.

**Legal Responsibility**

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required, by law, to ensure that the child attends the school at which he/she is registered.  Should a parent/carer fail to ensure that his/her child regularly attends that school then the parent/carer may be guilty of an offence.  When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

**Absence:**

All absences must be reported to the main office, in person or via a telephone call. If there is no one available to take your call, a message will need to be left. No parent should inform the school via other means (i.e. a message to the class teacher on Class Dojo).

The Attendance Lead will ensure that absences on the telephone lines are listened to before 10am and that these are recorded on Integris and via Child Protection Online Manager (CPOMS), if appropriate.

If a pupil is absent without explanation when the register is called and submitted, the Attendance Lead or SLT member will contact the parents the same day, wherever possible. The absence will also be followed up (if no contact has been made) with the parent to ensure that a written note or verbal acceptable explanation is received in order to explain the absence. When no reply is received, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If a child has poor attendance (below 91%) or the school has concerns, then a home visit may be conducted in order to check the child is safe and well.

The Attendance Lead will inform the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) of absences regarding any children who have EWO involvement. The School Attendance Officer will work closely, alongside the Headteacher, to update attendance data and to keep records of absences. This will include Local Authority Data and EWO records. The Attendance Officer will use the Local Authority (LA) data package, as well as the school’s own management system, to keep records of attendance for all pupils.

**Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval, in advance, for the child to be absent, or, where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

* illness, medical or dental appointments;
* days of religious observance;
* exclusion;
* traveler child travelling for the purposes of parents’ employment
* 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis).

Whenever a child is absent from school, it is the duty of the parent/carer to notify the school on the day of absence, before school starts. They must provide a reason for absence. As stated before, this will need to be done through the school office.

**Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child’s absence, or, where the explanation offered is considered to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

* no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
* the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, child can’t find uniform, cleaning the house, etc.);
* family holidays (unless granted under ‘exceptional’ circumstances).

When a child has poor attendance (below 91%), the school may unauthorise absences on each occasion, unless medical evidence is seen.

**Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence (PA) is when a pupil’s absence overall equates to 9% per cent or more of their possible sessions. Each case of PA is treated individually, as serious medical needs are taken into account and managed accordingly.

Any child with an attendance rate between 96% and 92% will be placed on an ‘Amber Group’ list. This will be formally documented on the child’s record. The Year Group Lead will telephone parents and carers to let them know the child will be monitored. The Attendance Lead will send out a monitoring letter, see below in appendix A. Bi-weekly, their attendance will be monitored to ensure that it is improving. Should the child’s attendance not improve, over a month’s period and it dip below 92%, without a viable explanation, they will be placed into ‘red group’ (see below).

Children with attendance 91% or below will be placed into a ‘Red Group’ list. If a child is on the ‘red group’ list, then the parent/carers of the child will be contacted by the Headteacher and followed up with a formal letter, see below in appendix B. This will be formally documented on the child’s record. The Headteacher and Attendance Lead will look to see if there are patterns in the children’s attendance record. Children in the ‘red group’ will be added to a ‘Working Together to improve Attendance Plan’ and Bi weekly, their attendance will be monitored to ensure that it is improving. The Attendance Lead and Headteacher will look to see: what the barriers to attending are, any patterns spotted, how the school is listening and understanding what the family/child says, how we are facilitating and supporting and what formal support has been offered. This will be reviewed each half term by the Headteacher and Attendance Lead.

If a child is in ‘red group’, and their attendance declines over a month, or if there is a sudden dip in attendance, a referral to the EWO will be made. A formal meeting (face to face or on the phone) may take place with professionals e.g. the Class Teacher, Headteacher and Educational Welfare Officer (if available).

The school will work with the family to identify any underlying issues (e.g. if a child is poorly lots of the time, the school nurse may become involved). Absences going forward may be unauthorised, unless medical evidence / appointment letters are seen. If the school does not hear of a reason why the child is ill, a home visit will be conducted. If the child / family is not at home, a letter will be left at the property, notifying the parents / carers of the visit (including the time) and requesting that a call is made to school. This may also be reported to the Police, who may conduct a safe and well check. Children’s Social Care and The Educational Welfare Officer may also be notified and fines / legal action may be taken.

**Monitoring and Reporting on Attendance**

Bi-weekly meetings will take place between the Attendance Officer and a member of the SLT to monitor any child who is in the red or amber group. The Attendance Officer will run reports each week to see if there are any new children to be added to either the Red or Amber Group. The Attendance Lead will also create a cumulative attendance analysis for all groups of pupils and attendance, to date. This will be compared with the national average and may also be compared within a triad of similar infant schools.

Year Group Leads will be made aware of who is in the red and amber categories. These children will be discussed during teachers’ weekly Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time. Year Group Leads (SLT) will ensure that any attendance concerns are recorded as per the Child Protection Policy (on CPOMS).

The Headteacher and the Leadership Team will discuss concerns and any child on the in the Red of Amber Group, during SLT meetings. Information may be shared with the Educational Welfare Officer or letters may be sent electronically to parents.

The Governing Body will be kept up to date regarding attendance-related issues, which will feature through the Headteacher Report. The Safeguarding Governor may be asked to support with meetings as / when required.

The attainment of the Red group will be tracked on the online EAZMag assessment system as a factor and a barrier to learning. Persistent absenteeism will also factor into Pupil Progress Meetings where pupil attendance will be discussed and actions may be agreed.

**Approved Educational Activity**

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as absent, and will be recorded appropriately (Code B, D or V). This means that children attending educational visits, or approved sporting activities, can be counted as statistically ‘present’. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

**Registers**

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Teachers will take the register and will use an online system using the appropriate code (see - Attendance Codes).

If the Class Teacher is not present, then the lead teaching assistant / teacher will ensure this is done. All registers must be completed by 9:15am. The Office Team will ensure that registers are printed by 9:30am. **All teachers must count the children after the register has been taken to further ensure it is accurate and correct.**

In considering attendance levels, the register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court.

The Office Team will ensure that any reasons for absence given are recorded on individual pupils’ records. This will form a chronology, if need be. This will be done on Integris and on CPOMS for children who are in the red group. The regulatory requirements placed on schools, with regard to the keeping of registers, are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Each term, the school will submit details of the level of absence within the school via the School Census.

In the event of a fire, the Office Team will ensure that the Attendance Registers (stored in the office) are distributed to Class Teachers.

**Punctuality**

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning. At Alvaston Infant and Nursery School, children will come into school at 8:45am, ready for a calm start. A child who arrives at school after 9:15am will be marked as late and they will receive a ‘L’ mark on the register.

Children who arrive after the register has closed (9:20am) will receive a ‘U’ mark. This will affect their attendance. Any child who is late must enter school via the school office.

Upon receiving 5 late marks per term, a letter from the Headteacher will be issued. In addition, the Headteacher may hold meetings with the parents at the time of parents/carers bringing their children into school. Where a child is persistently late and has accrued many (more than 5) ‘L’ marks in the register, a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service, who may in turn issue a Penalty Notice**.**

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor’s appointment and have subsequently come to school late, will receive a ‘medical mark – M’. School may wish to see evidence of appointments if they become frequent. Medical and dentist appointments should be taken outside of school time, wherever possible.

**It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Attendance Lead to monitor attendance and punctuality. The school will work closely with the Educational Welfare Officer in order to ensure children are attending school.**

**Leave of Absence**

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the ‘Leave Request’ form and any request can only be authorised where Alvaston Infant and Nursery School accepts there are ‘exceptional circumstances’.

At Alvaston Infant and Nursery School, when considering such requests, we take into account the following:

* circumstances of the request
* purpose of the leave
* length of the proposed leave
* the pupil’s general absence/attendance record going back 12 months
* any attempts made to mitigate the length of absence
* the proximity of testing
* general welfare of the pupil

If the school is informed or suspect that a family has been on holiday whilst suggesting to the school another reason of absence, this will be unauthorised. It will be up to the family to prove that they have not taken a family holiday.

Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation, legal action may be taken (see section on Penalty Notices, below).

Parents/carers risk losing their child’s place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed, as defined in legislation. Nursery attendance is also expected and should nursery children have poor attendance, they may be at risk of losing their place. A conversation regarding this will always be had with the parents and the parents will be given an opportunity to improve attendance, first, where appropriate.

**Penalty Notices**

Where children accrue sufficient unauthorised absences, school may make a referral to the Education Welfare Service. The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able, but unwilling to ensure their child’s school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil’s attainment levels, their wellbeing and also it also disrupts school routines.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court, unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child at £120. However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60. The Education Welfare Service may also consider other options, such as taking further legal action if the parent/carer has been issued with numerous fines.

**Absence for religious reasons**

The Local Authority has agreed with Religious Leaders and SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) that one day for each religious festival (no more than three days in any one academic year), should be counted as authorised absence. This will be marked as 'R' in the register.

**Children Missing Education**

Any child who has missed 20 school days and their whereabouts is unknown will be reported as a Child Missing in Education (CME). The school will actively seek to make daily contact with parents/carers in order to establish their whereabouts. It is the duty of both the Education Welfare Service and the school to collaborate in finding the pupil before deleting them from the register. The school will complete all required checks (admissions, housing, social care, school health, NCAT, home visits) and will liaise with the Local Authority to ensure that the processes have been fully followed before deleting a child from role.

**Nursery Attendance**

Whilst Nursery Education is non-statutory, we expect the same standards of attendance for our nursery children. At the time of acceptance of the offer of a place in Nursery for their child, parents are made aware of the expectation of regular, consistent attendance. They are also made aware of the importance of being on time.  Regular attendance at Nursery will help children to develop the skills and attitudes to become successful learners.

Children’s attendance will be looked at, bi-weekly, by the Nursery Lead. If a child’s attendance drops below 91% then a formal letter will be sent home explaining that if their child’s attendance doesn’t improve above 96% then they are at risk of having their child’s nursery place removed. Parents will always be given the opportunity to improve this attendance before the place is reoffered.

If, at the end of that half term, the child’s attendance hasn’t improved then the Nursery Lead or Head Teacher will contact the parent, and the nursery place will be withdrawn. They will then have to put their child’s name back onto the Nursery waiting list and wait for spaces to become available.

We know that Nursery is not compulsory but due to extensive waiting lists, we feel this is a fair process.

If pupils fail to attend for a period exceeding 20 days, then their place may be removed, (depending upon the specific circumstances) and they will have to return to the waiting list until a place becomes available.

**Attendance in the Curriculum**

Children are regularly educated about the importance of coming to school and these messages are communicated with parents via formal letters, newsletter, attendance weeks, prospectus, Class Dojo and Parents’ Evenings. Children will have half termly attendance meetings with their teacher and they will be informed regarding how many lessons they have attended / not attended per half term. Child’s voice will be sought in relation to this and a report will be shared with parents. (Appendix D.)

The principles of this policy will also be applied to all pupils within the school

**Review date:  Sept 2024 or sooner, if required**

Appendix A

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Initial Attendance Concern Letter (96% and below attendance)**

As a result of regular monitoring, your child’s attendance has been highlighted as a cause for concern and they have now been added into an ‘Amber Group’.

………………………………………..………attendance is currently

…………….…. %

for this academic year to date.

You will be aware that our school is working very hard to improve school attendance and that your child’s attendance needs to be least 96%+ attendance to meet government targets - this does allow for genuine illnesses. You may be asked to provide medical proof as evidence that your child has been ill.

Your child’s attendance will now be monitored on a bi-weekly basis, until it improves. Should your child’s attendance continue to deteriorate, without genuine reason, they may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer and home visits may be undertaken.

May I also stress that research does prove that full and regular attendance does improve attainment and ultimately your child’s progress - thus improving life chances and enabling your child to achieve their full potential.

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child’s attendance please do not hesitate to contact the school to speak to a member of the office team or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Allen

Head Teacher

Appendix B

Dear Parents / Carers,

**Serious Attendance Concern Letter (91% and below attendance)**

As a result of regular monitoring, your child’s attendance has been highlighted as a significant cause for concern and they have now been added into a ‘Red Group.’

………………………………………..………attendance is currently…………….…. %

for this academic year to date.

You will be aware that our school is working very hard to improve school attendance and that your child’s attendance needs to be least 96%+ attendance to meet government targets - this does allow for genuine illnesses.

Due to your child’s poor attendance, medical evidence must now be provided in the form of a prescription or medicine bottles from the doctor, or hospital letters and appointment cards. **Unfortunately, we will not be able to authorise any absences without this evidence from this point onwards, regardless of reasons provided.** We hope that with this measure in place, and your on-going support, that your child’s attendance level will raise quickly to nationally accepted levels.

### Parents are legally responsible for ensuring your child’s regular and punctual attendance at school. I must advise you to make certain that your child resumes a regular attendance pattern as soon as possible, and that failure to do so may result in the Local Authority giving consideration to taking legal action against you - a course of action that can sensibly be avoided with your co-operation.

Your child’s attendance will now be monitored on a bi-weekly basis (in accordance with the school Attendance Policy). If your child’s attendance continues to deteriorate, they will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer and home visits may be undertaken.

May I also stress that research does prove that full and regular attendance does improve attainment and ultimately your child’s progress - thus improving life chances and enabling your child to achieve their full potential.

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child’s attendance please do not hesitate to contact the school to speak to a member of the office team or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Allen

Head Teacher

Nursery Attendance Letter

Dear Parent / Carer,

**Important Information Regarding Your Child’s Attendance**

As you are aware we continue to work hard to improve our pupil attendance levels, thus improving the life chances of your child and enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Unfortunately **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s** attendance has now dropped to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**%** and in accordance with **Nursery Admission Policy**, we are informing you that you are at risk of having their child’s nursery place removed.

If, at the end of this half term,  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** attendance has not improved or/and he/she fails to attend for a period exceeding 20 days then the Nursery Lead or Head Teacher will contact you, and the nursery place will be withdrawn. You can then put **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’**s name back onto the Nursery waiting list and wait for spaces to become available.

We know that Nursery is not compulsory but due to extensive waiting lists, we feel this is a fair process.

**If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school.**

**Yours sincerely,**

Miss Allen

Headteacher

##### Appendix C - Attendance Codes (on Integris)

##### # - Planned whole or partial school closure

##### \* - Not Yet Marked

##### / - Present

##### B - Educated off site (NOT Dual reg.)

##### C - Other Authorised Circumstances

##### D - Dual registration (attend elsewhere)

##### E - Excluded (no alternative provision)

##### G - Family holiday (NOT agreed)

##### H - Family holiday (agreed)

##### I - Illness (NOT medical or dental)

##### I01 - Illness

##### I02 - Illness - Confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

##### J - Interview

##### L - Late (before registers closed)

##### M - Medical/Dental appointments

##### N - No reason yet provided for absence

##### O - Unauthorised absence

##### P - Approved sporting activity

##### R - Religious observance

##### S - Study leave

##### T - Traveller absence

##### U - Late (after registers closed)

##### V - Educational visit or trip

##### W - Work experience

##### X - COVID related/Non-compulsory school age absence

##### X01 - Non compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school

##### X02 - Pupil self-isolating with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms

##### X05 - Pupils required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)

##### X06 - Pupil shielding because they are clinically extremely vulnerable and have been advised specifically by their Doctor or public health authority not to attend school

##### X07 - Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of specific attendance restrictions to education settings set out in Government advice

##### X08 - Pupil not attending school in line with advice from Directors of Public Health as part of outbreak management

##### X09 - Pupil or student in a specific group required, by NHS test and trace, to self-isolate as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 (e.g. those over 18 years 6 months and not fully vaccinated)

##### Y - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

##### Z - Pupil not on roll

##### Half termly attendance meeting record, with children – Appendix D

##### A close-up of a school report Description automatically generated

