

<b>Aldryngton Primary School</b>				
<b>Policy</b>	<b>S11</b>	<b>Attendance</b>		
Approved	July 2021	Signed		
Website	Yes	Chair, Curriculum, Community and Safeguarding Committee		
Review	Triennial	Next review	July 2024	

## Overview

*'Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.'*

**School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, Department for Education, August 2016**

Aldryngton always expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils. We support pupils and their families to ensure that good attendance and punctuality is achieved. Please see the tables below to see how we describe attendance at the school and the impact of lost learning caused by absence and poor punctuality.

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
99-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
97-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4

Punctuality	Approx. days lost per year
5 minutes late every day	3+
15 minutes late every day	10
30 minutes late every day	19

Attendance at school is an important pre-requisite for a successful and fulfilling school career. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance and lack of punctuality can all serve to undermine educational achievement and results in considerable long-term disadvantage to children.

The Local Authority, school, parents/carers, pupils and other members of the community are expected to work collaboratively to maximise attendance.

## Legal Framework

The Legal framework governing attendance at school is set by:

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

The 1996 Education Act states that:-

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

a) *to his / her age, ability and aptitude and*

- b) *to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise'*

N.B. a child is of compulsory school age at the start of the term following their 5th birthday.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Senior Leadership Team (SLT):**

- Be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- Deal with parental requests for absence from learning in line with Wokingham Local Authority policies and procedures
- Consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Wokingham Local Authority policies and procedures.
- Oversee the analysis of weekly, termly, and yearly attendance data, and respond to findings.
- Meet with the Admin Officer and any other relevant staff to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having a positive impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- Ensure that strategies to promote, recognise and maintain good attendance and punctuality are being consistently used.
- Work with teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after any long-term absence.
- Revise and amend the policy, as required.

#### **Admin Officer:**

- Support SLT with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality
- Leads on and takes responsibility for attendance and punctuality on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with parents and responding to parental enquiries.
- Implement the daily checking of SIMS registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- Ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Takes messages from parents and carers via phone, email and Parentmail about pupil absence.
- Record reasons for absence and update class registers.
- Carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school and no reason has been received.
- Follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Remind parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school of reasons for absence.
- Promptly inform the SLT if there are any concerns relating to attendance or punctuality.
- Produce attendance and punctuality data for SLT as requested.
- As directed by SLT, contact parents/carers by letter if attendance and/or punctuality poses a concern.
- As directed by SLT, liaise with and report to outside agencies including the Local Authority
- Oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.

#### **Staff:**

- Complete the class attendance register twice daily with the pupils.
- Ensure quality first teaching every day with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents and carers and work collaboratively with them in meeting the child's needs.

- Work with pupils and their families where attendance and/or punctuality is a concern, identifying barriers and working to overcome these.
- Promptly inform the SLT of pupils who persist with poor attendance and/or punctuality.
- Feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents' Evenings.

**Parents:**

- In line with legal requirements, ensure their child attends regularly and arrives on time, missing as little school as possible.
- Contact the school by phone, email or Parentmail on the first day of any absence by (8:40), and on each and every subsequent day of absence
- Arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours, unless this cannot be avoided.
- Complete leave of absence forms at least 4 weeks in advance (where possible) for any type of absence that is not illness.
- Provide evidence where required e.g. appointment cards, prescriptions or letters for medical appointments.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child attends school in the correct uniform and with the equipment required for lessons.
- Work in partnership with school staff and other agencies in the best interests of their child to secure good attendance and punctuality, including informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on their attendance and/or punctuality.

**Pupils:**

- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn.
- Talk to their class teacher if they are experiencing difficulties with school that may affect their attendance and punctuality.

**Local Authority**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to promote and enforce regular school attendance, this duty being carried out, in the main, by the Education Welfare Officers. This may involve them working with schools or working directly with parents in addressing specific issues related to improving their child's level of attendance.

**Penalty notices**

The school has adopted the Wokingham Borough Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct issued March 2021.

## Understanding Absence From Learning at Aldryngton Primary School

### Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as authorised or unauthorised. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school. Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school is satisfied that it should be authorised. Parents cannot authorise absences, and should be aware that, while calling the school or providing a note for an absence complies with safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised.

### Authorised Absence

There are some circumstances where the school may authorise absence, including:

#### **Illness**

Pupils should not be in school when it is not safe to do so, for example, if they are exhibiting symptoms such as high temperature, vomiting, diarrhoea. While pupils should not be sent to school if they are genuinely unwell, if their illness is not sufficient to seek medical advice then parents are advised to send their child to school in the first instance, where they can be monitored by school staff.

The most up to date Covid-19 guidance from the government will stipulate when children should not attend school and obtain a test. The most up to date guidance can be found using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

#### **Medical or dental appointments**

Parent are requested to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, children should attend school for as much of the day as possible, and only be absent from school for the time of the appointment, and the transport time to and from the appointment. In order to authorise absence for a medical or dental appointment, medical evidence will be required in the form of a copy of an appointment card, letter, prescription, etc.

#### **Exceptional circumstances, i.e., bereavement of an immediate family member**

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate, for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background to a child during times of uncertainty. In line with Wokingham Local Authority's 'Leave in Term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, the Headteacher may only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional; for example, the death of a parent, carer or sibling of the pupil, or life threatening/critical illness of a parent, carer, or sibling of the pupil. Parents experiencing what they believe to be exceptional circumstances wishing to request leave in term time for their child are required to complete a 'Leave of Absence' form which can be obtained from the school office or found on the school website. The Headteacher will then decide on whether the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional, and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

#### **Religious observance**

We recognise that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays or weekends and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates in advance of them occurring and are required to complete a 'Leave of Absence' form which can be obtained from the school office. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are limited to a maximum of two days per academic year.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable, and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping, own or a family member's birthday or treats from family members.
- Looking after other family members
- Staying at home because other members in the family are disabled or unwell (unless related to Covid-19).
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Haircut
- To get new shoes or uniform

## **Recording and Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality at Aldryngton Primary School**

### **Class registers**

Registers are the primary way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. These are completed using SIMS. The system ensures that no children are missed, and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Completion of registers is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the class or group for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but they must be accurately submitted at agreed times.

### **Register timings**

The gates open at 8:40 until 8:50am to welcome children into school, and class registers are open between (8:40-9am). At (9am), the register must be closed and submitted. Any children arriving to school after this time, regardless of the time of arrival, are required to sign in at the school office to ensure we have an accurate record of who is on site during the day. If arriving between (9-9:30am), the office staff will record children as late (L). If they arrive after (9:30am), children are recorded as unauthorised absence (U).

Afternoon registers open at (13:10) and must be completed and submitted before afternoon lessons begin.

### **Emergency contacts**

Schools are required, where possible, to hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This supports good practice in ensuring that the school has multiple options to pursue for any child who is not attending school or who poses a welfare or safeguarding concern. We ask for all parents to provide two or more emergency contact number for their child. We hold a list of any pupils for whom two or more emergency contact numbers are not able to be provided, and these children receive a priority response in our first day absence procedures to ensure any welfare or safeguarding concerns are promptly addressed.

### **Responding to absence**

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent, the following process will be followed:

- **Day 1:** a phone call will be made to the primary parent contact number regarding the child's absence. If no response has been received, a phone call will be made to each contact number in turn regarding the child's absence.
- **Day 2:** if no response has been received from day 1, SLT will be informed, who will make further appropriate enquiries, including, if necessary, a home visit, and/or a referral to Social Care

The school must establish a reason for every absence. When contact with a parent or carer is successfully made, they are asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded on the child's record on SIMS. Registers are checked every Tuesday morning for any absences the previous week for which a reason has not been received, and

parents are contacted again to request a reason for absence. If no response is received within 2 requests, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

### **School attendance and punctuality monitoring**

The school monitors the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils, classes, and pupil groups. We will liaise directly with parents where their child's attendance and/or punctuality is posing a concern, i.e., attendance below a 'good' level (97%), multiple unauthorised absences, repeating patterns of absence or lateness, recent decline in attendance and/or punctuality.

Attendance of non- statutory school aged pupils will still be monitored in line with the rest of the school and parents encouraged to send their child to school every day.

### **Persistent absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more school days across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need the fullest support and co-operation of parents to tackle this. Any child that is seen to have reached the persistent absence threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority in our monitoring processes. This will prompt immediate communication with parents and is also likely to require involvement from the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer. In extreme cases of poor attendance and/or punctuality, the Education Welfare Officer can instigate legal action against parents.

### **Legal action and penalty notices**

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 states: *"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."* If a child is absent from school without the Headteacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken. Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007 states that penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60 per parent, per child. If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120 per parent, per child. If this is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will prosecute under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 unless it is confirmed that the penalty notice had been issued in error. The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order. Please note that penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child, and 'parent' includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child regardless of whether they live with the child. **These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in a criminal record.**

The school operates within the guidelines set out by Wokingham's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct document issued. The most up to date document can be found using the link below:

<https://wsh.wokingham.gov.uk/learning-and-teaching/education-welfare/parents/holidays/>

### **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

In line with DfE requirements and Wokingham Local Authority Children Missing in Education procedures, staff will act immediately on any known welfare or safeguarding concerns where a child is missing from school, including, where necessary, a CME referral to the Educational Welfare Officer, and/or a referral to Social Care. Please click [here](#) for further information from Wokingham regarding Children Missing in Education..