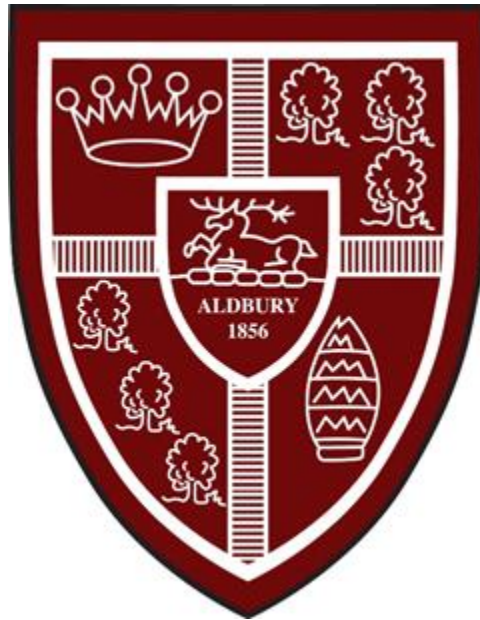


Aldbury C of E Primary & Nursery School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

‘To live life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10)

Approved by: FGB	Date: November 2022
Last reviewed on: September 2022	
Next review due: November 2025	



Rationale

Aldbury Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Aims

The school aims to:

- Promote, among parents and children, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.
- Work in partnership with parents and the Attendance Improvement Team to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

Statutory Framework

A pupil of compulsory school age is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised. Even then the school reserves the right to decline to authorise absence in line with the policy

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving punctuality and attendance at Aldbury C of E Primary & Nursery School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from the school Office staff and/or Class teacher, and if the need should arise, from the Headteacher.

Parents/Carers

Parents whose children are registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Notify the school soon as possible - by phone call, message from another responsible adult, if a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late.
- Work in partnership with school to resolve issues, which may lead to non- attendance
- Ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- Avoid booking holidays during term time as these will be considered as unauthorised



School should:

- Support the attendance of pupils and deal with problems that may lead to non-attendance
- Call the attendance register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Differentiate between absence that is authorised and unauthorised
- Consider the maximising of attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole
- Support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issues which may lead to non-attendance
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents in the way in which attendance issues are addressed, recognising family circumstances
- Produce school attendance policies that are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents.
- Adhere to Hertfordshire County Council guidance on Penalty Notices as per section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Registration

- At least one member of staff will be on the playground from 8.45 a.m and the school bell will be rung at 8.50 a.m.
- Registers will be called at 8.55 a.m. and at 1.15 p.m. daily, and will be marked electronically using the Arbor system
- The register must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. It must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.
- Pupils who arrive after the class doors have closed should report to the school office where they will be signed in by the office staff. The office staff will complete their details in the 'late' book. The office staff will subsequently amend the electronic register entry to read absent/late.
- Registers will be checked regularly by the office staff and Head Teacher to ensure that correct procedures are being followed. The Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) will monitor the registers during his/her visits.
- Schools are required to notify their AIO of any pupils of compulsory age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason.
- Any pupil with an attendance below 90% is considered as a Persistent Absentee and monitored closely

Punctuality

Lateness should be monitored and followed up.

- When a pupil arrives late he/she should be marked 'late' but counted as present for that session.
- If a pupil arrives late after the register has closed but before 9.15a.m. and provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session. When a pupil arrives late having missed registration his/her presence on site should be noted in the 'late log' kept in the office. (This is important for fire/evacuation



emergencies).

- If a child arrives after 9.15 a.m. Parents are asked to complete the details in the 'late arrivals' book. Children who arrive late should not be left at the gate to come in alone.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

Aldbury C of E Primary & Nursery School will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to 'School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence' (DFE 1994). This states that:

Absence can be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave (defined as "leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body").
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- There is a family bereavement (close relative – parent, or grandparent).
- The pupil is taking part in an approved public performance.
- The pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.
- The pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion. A family holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

Illness

If your child is unwell and needs to stay off school please could you notify the school as soon as possible via an email or telephone call to the school office on 01442 851240

How long should my child be off if they have been sick or had diarrhoea?

Your child should not attend school if they have been sick or have an infectious/contagious disease until they are clear. In the case of sickness and diarrhoeas, please keep your child at home until **48 hours after** the last incident to minimise the risk of it being passed on to others

Information on other childhood illnesses and school attendance can be found on the school website

Absence should be unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming or the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- Examples of unauthorised absence may include:
 - The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (eg, a birthday)
 - The pupil is away from school on a family holiday or family gathering

Note: Absence notes are kept for at least a term. In the case of a pupil whose absence is



a cause for concern they will be kept until the concern has passed.

Holidays

Indeed, parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a reason and as such it **will not be authorised**. It is school policy that teachers will not set work for pupils who are absent due to parents taking them on holiday in term time.

Procedures for Following up Absence

- The school office will contact a parent by telephone if a pupil is absent and no reason/explanation has been provided by the parent/carer.
- Absence patterns are monitored closely. If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Head Teacher will contact the parents and invite them to attend a meeting at school.
- If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and parents fail to communicate the reason or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, the Head Teacher will contact the parents
- If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the AIO during his/her consultation visits. Persistent absence may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued to the parent.

11. Fixed Penalty Notices

Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision. A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued:

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The deliberate taking of a holiday during term time without the school's permission and where this has resulted in a period of unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term exceeding 15 sessions (7.5 school days)
- The pupil must have at least 15 sessions (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
- The school or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of **two** separate penalty notices can be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
- Penalty notices can be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance



- In accordance with LA guidelines, the amount of the penalty to be paid is as follows:

- £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days
- £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.
- Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

The primary responsibility for issuing a penalty notice rests with the Local Authority. Head teachers may apply to the Local Authority for a penalty notice to be issued. The LA issues penalty notices on behalf of Hertfordshire schools in order to ensure consistency and in the event that a prosecution may need to be brought against a parent. Full details of the Hertfordshire guidance on Fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absence are available on request and are published on the school website.

Strategies for promoting Attendance and Punctuality

Aldbury CE Primary School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed.

The school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken. A broad and balanced curriculum is offered to all pupils. Every effort is made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.

Good attendance and punctuality will be openly acknowledged by the school through:

- school assemblies
- presentation of certificates
- attendance cup to classes on a weekly basis

Attendance data is regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.

Pupils whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement. The class teacher will monitor and review these targets. Letters will be sent to parents on a half-termly basis if their child's attendance is below 90%

Parents will be regularly reminded (via newsletters, parents' evenings, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.

Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.

Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.

The Head teacher makes termly reports to the school's governing body on attendance matters.

The school, when appropriate, liaises with other agencies - Educational Psychology Service Social Services, Child and Family Guidance, etc. - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

The Headteacher will have regular meetings with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.



On admitting their children to school parents are asked to sign a *Home-School Agreement*.