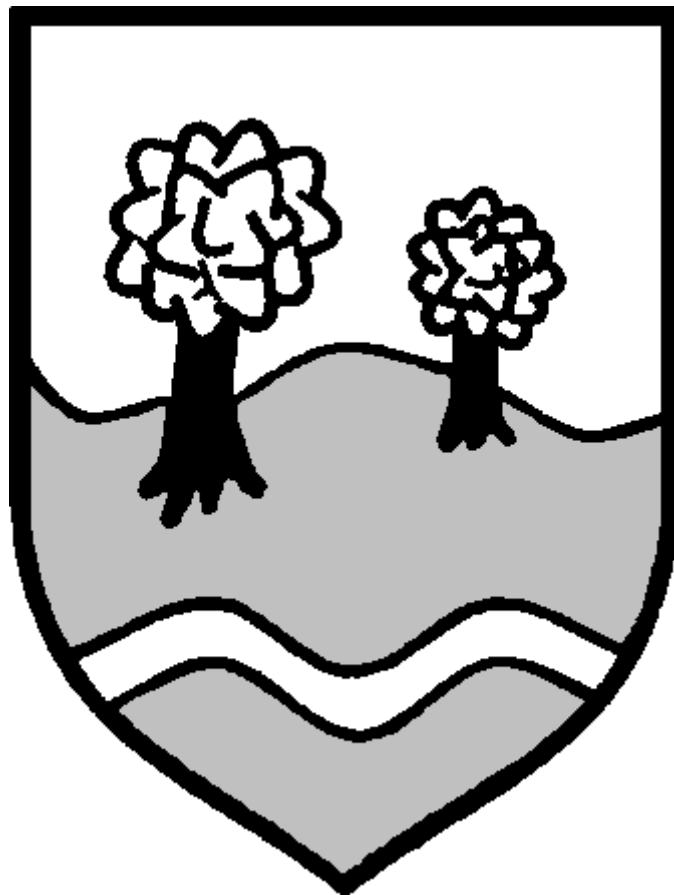


Great Alne Primary School

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND
PUNCTUALITY



Policy date: Jan 2022

Review date: Jan 2024

Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Principles

- Regular and full time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life
- It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school by phone call on the first day of an absence by 9.30am, and thereafter every subsequent day by 9.30am
- The school has set an attendance target of 96%. Covid-19 has impacted attendance levels over the last 2 academic years therefore the aim is for the school to return to pre-Covid-19 attendance levels.

Purpose

- The purpose of this Policy is to set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school
- Clarify the role of the parents/carer

Parental Responsibility

The Education Act 1996 section 7 defines the Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

- The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:
 - (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
 - (b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Education Act 1996 section 576 defines the meaning of "parent".

- In this Act, unless the context of otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person-
 - (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
 - (b) who has care of him, except that in section 499(8) it only includes such a person if he is an individual.

Statutory Duty of Schools

Schools are responsible, in line with the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils who are on the school's admission roll.

Definitions:

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent / carer. For example, if a child is unwell, the parent / carer telephone the school by 9.30am to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents /carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents /carers will be classified as authorised.

If a child is absent on medical grounds for 3 consecutive days and/or regular basis, school may request to see medical proof to verify the absence. This is most commonly in the form of an appointment card from the doctor's surgery and or prescription scrips.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent /carer.

Punctuality

It is expected that children will be in class by 8.55 a.m. Arrivals after this time will be marked as late in the register. Children who arrive after 9.30am without explanation, will be marked as 'late after the registers closed', which is deemed an unauthorised absence. Late arrivals will be monitored and parents /carers contacted if the problem persists. Persistent lateness can be extremely problematic as it means the child misses lesson input. If your child is persistently late, we will be inviting you in for a meeting to discuss this.

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly it is the resident parent /carer's responsibility to call the school office and inform of the reason for absence. For safeguarding purposes, we request that this call is made by 9.30 am.

When a child is absent the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, (who will endeavour to contact a parent /carer if we have not had

a message). This also applies to children in Reception who are not of compulsory school age.

Where possible we ask that parents send a note to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a scheduled medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact with the parent /carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Examples of when an absence may be classified as unauthorised:

- A child is kept off school because a parent is ill
- A child is absent because a sibling is ill
- The parent cannot get the child to school
- The child is taken on a shopping trip
- The child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat
- A child is absent due to family work patterns
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- A child is more than half an hour late without a satisfactory explanation

Persistent Absenteeism

A child is identified as a 'persistent absentee (PA) once they have missed 10% of their own possible sessions. Therefore, all children with attendance below 90% are classed as PA.

Absence at this level may do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and lessons missed cannot be repeated and 'catching up' on work is never as good as the original learning experience; therefore, we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence level or is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority and parents/carers will be informed.

Children who are identified as PA are tracked and monitored by class teachers and parents/carers are advised of how such levels of absence will affect their child's attainment.

If measures put in place by the school fail to improve the child's attendance, then the case could be reported to **Warwickshire Attendance Service**. Persistent unauthorised absences could lead to Warwickshire County Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home if the absence is authorised, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence

supported by a medical consultant, the school will contact Local Authority support services for advice and guidance.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent /carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parent /carer will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem with the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services for additional support. This request could result in the LA contacting you to discuss your child's attendance and your duty to ensure your child attends school.

Requests for leave of absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence: The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents /carers do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent /carer i.e. the parent /carer with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent /carer, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to

consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a resident parent /carer may legitimately request leave of absence for a child, for example, personal family circumstances. We request parent /carer to contact the school at least a week in advance and complete a leave of absence form.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school uses a staged approach to manage attendance and persistent absenteeism and believe this to be a whole school approach. The school will build a welcoming atmosphere and provide support as necessary when students return after an absence.

All class teachers will maintain effective communication with the /Head Teacher and Deputy DSL on all attendance matters concerning their class. Any pupil missing that is of concern will be identified to the office staff as a matter of urgency for follow up. Attendance will form part of discussions at parents' evenings and as concerns arise.

The Head Teacher and Deputy DSL will review attendance every half term. Any child with attendance below the school target will be reviewed and discussed. All decisions as to what stage of attendance monitoring will be fed back to the class teacher to ensure consistency in the school approach.

Monitoring procedures

Children who are in school every day find learning more satisfying and manage the demands of the school day in a more positive way. The school monitor the attendance of all children half termly and use a staged approach to address any issues.

- Stage 1 - Initial concern (below school target of 93%) - Child's attendance level has fallen below the school target. Letter sent to parents/carers expressing concerns and offering the parent/carers an opportunity to contact school to discuss. Attendance to be monitored over the next 4 - 6 weeks.
- Stage 2 - Child's attendance level declines further or fails to show a sustained improvement. Stage 2 letter sent and Parent/carers offered an opportunity to contact the school to discuss concerns. Deputy DSL to speak with child and where appropriate set an appropriate individual short term attendance target.
- Stage 3 - Despite previous intervention, child's attendance level is still not improving. Parents/carers invited to school for a meeting to discuss concerns and the potential support from external agencies (e.g. Early Help). Formal individual attendance target set and parents advised that any absence during the period will be unauthorised unless covered by appropriate medical evidence. If a parent/carers declines the offer of a

meeting, targets will be set and parents should be sent a letter outlining the target and an agreed target review date.

- Any children failing to show an appropriate level of improvement may be discussed with the Warwickshire Attendance Service.
- If during the monitoring period attendance improves a letter of recognition will be sent to parent/carers. The letter will also notify parent/carer that the school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure a sustained improvement.

Additional information about the negative effect of school absence is included below:

100 - 98% attendance	190 school days	Excellent	The very best chance of success for your child
97 - 95% attendance	180 school days	Good	Best chance of success for your child
94 - 93% attendance	171 school days	Worrying	Less chance of success for your child
92 - 91% attendance	161 school days	Concerning	Less chance of success for your child
90% attendance	152 school days	Serious concern	Persistent Absenteeism - the impact on your child's education is now a serious concern to the school
Less than 85%	School will be seeking advice in how best to support you in improving your child's attendance		

- If a child attends school 90% of the time, this is still well below the National requirements and is deemed a Persistent absent - and 90% attendance actually means missing one half of a school day every week!! ...Or all of February in one school year
- If 10 days are taken out of school for a family holiday - this automatically lowers your child's attendance to 94.7% for the year
- If for whatever reason, your child missed an average of one day a week for their whole time in school...this would actually add up to missing the equivalent of two years schooling or not starting school until you were 7

Punctuality is also a major factor in how a child progresses. Even just a few minutes late at the start of each day can affect how much your child achieves.

The following table highlights the impact a few minutes each day has on your child's learning:

5 minutes late each day	up to 1 whole DAY missed every TERM
15 minutes late each day	2 whole WEEKS missed every YEAR.
50 minutes late once a week	1 whole DAY missed EVERY HALF Term
50 minutes late every week.	90% attendance over a year!

90% attendance every year during primary school is equal to nearly a full year missed. (130 days missed)

Missing from Education

Great Alne Primary have a legal duty to identify children missing education (CME), and to make sure they return to education where possible. The school will report a pupil as CME when:

- Child/ren have 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation
- Child/ren are not resident at their last known address and not attending school OR have not taken up a school place as expected

Monitoring and Review

Governors work with the Head Teacher to help shape the strategic direction of the school.

We expect that Governors will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted within school, including children, parents and staff
 - Every two years review the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Identify a Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

The school will keep accurate records on file for a minimum period of three years.