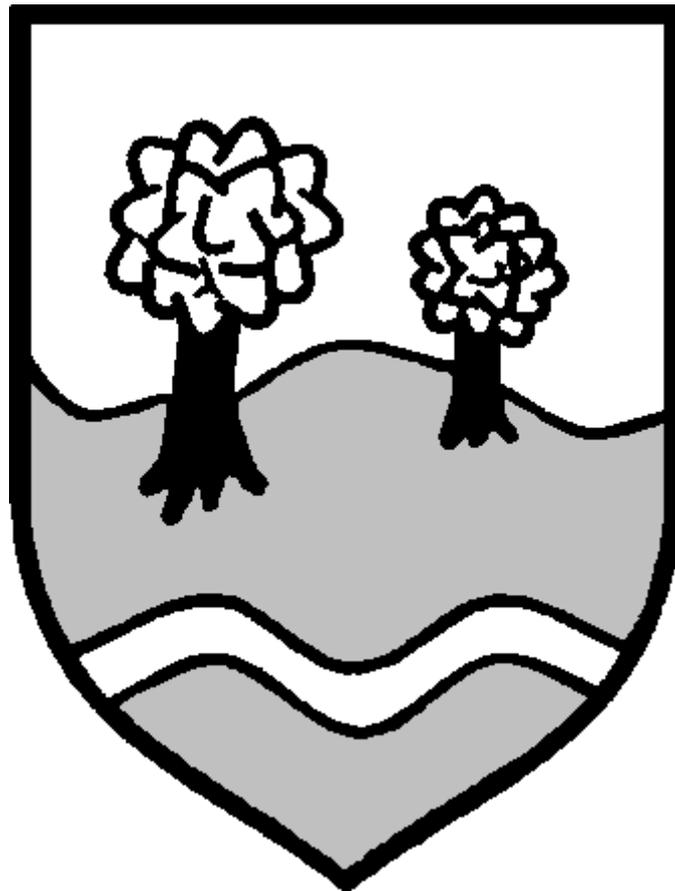


Great Alne Primary School

**POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**



Policy date: Jan 2020

Review date: Jan 2020

## 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 parents 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 and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality

## 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

## 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.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## 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, 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.

### 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 parent /carer's responsibility to call the school office and inform of the reason for absence. 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.

A note may be sent 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 will 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

### **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, 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, the school will contact Local Authority support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

### **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, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parent /carer understands the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parent /carer who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

Requests of leave must be applied for prior to any arrangements being made - E.G. prior to booking a holiday.

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 expect parent /carer to contact the school at least a week in advance and complete a leave of absence form.

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 understand that holidays are generally less expensive during term-time, but this does not count as an exceptional circumstance. The following examples are of leave that will not be class as exceptional / authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked wrong dates in error
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

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

### **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

### **Young Carers**

Where a child is identified as a Young Carer, their individual circumstances and support that they need will be monitored by the school lead for young carers. Staff will work together to plan any necessary alterations to that child's school day and use their knowledge of the child to plan appropriate support for that child and their family. This may include (but is not limited to) referral to the Warwickshire Young Carers service, negotiation of timetable, allocation of extra-curricular activities, support with payments in school, support with transport and access to other services in school (counselling).

We will provide advice about how young people can get into school where transport is a problem.

When absence notes are not produced because of the known home circumstances of the young carer, arrangements are agreed for appropriately coding and recording absences.

### Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will receive information termly from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. The Governing body has a dedicated committee member who is responsible for attendance and who will support the school in all areas of attendance, where appropriate. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. The school uses a staged approach to manage attendance and persistent absenteeism. The school's Attendance Officer will prepare attendance information and implement the staged letters to parents as overviewed in appendix 1.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Additional information from the Department for Education about the negative effect of school absence is included below:

100% attendance	190 school days	Excellent	The very best chance of success for your child
95% attendance	180 school days	Good	Best chance of success for your child
90% attendance	171 school days	Worrying	Less chance of success for your child
85% attendance	161 school days	Concerning	Less chance of success for your child
80% attendance	152 school days	Serious concern	Possible court action!
Less than 80%	Persistent absenteeism. School will be seeking advice and taking action!		

- If a school can improve their attendance by 1%, they will see a 5-6% improvement in attainment.
- If a child attends school 90% of the time, this is still well below the National requirements - 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	2 teaching days lost	Approximately 0.5 week
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10 minutes late each day	6.5 teaching days lost	Approximately 1 week
15 minutes late each day	10 teaching days lost	2 weeks
20 minutes late each day	13 teaching days lost	Approximately 2.5 weeks
30 minutes late each day	19 teaching days lost	Approximately 4 weeks

## Appendix 1

Staged Approach To the Management of Attendance		
<p>Whole school attendance is monitored at a minimum of term but more frequently as appropriate to the needs of the school.</p> <p>The whole school attendance target is based on an evaluation of the last 3/5 years previous attendance.</p> <p>Attendance is more closely evaluated of pupils whose attendance is below the whole school target.</p>		
Stage	Trigger	Outcome
1	Attendance falls below the whole school target and the child's attendance is of concern.	<p>Letter 1 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expressing concern about attendance</li> <li>Informing the parents of current attendance</li> <li>Enclosing a registration certificate</li> <li>Reminding parent /carer of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence'</li> <li>Welcoming the parent /carer to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further.</li> </ul> <p>Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.</p>
2	Parents / Carers have received a Stage 1 letter and attendance remains of concern.	<p>Letter 2 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informing parent /carer of ongoing concern about attendance</li> <li>Informing the parent /carer of current attendance</li> <li>Enclosing a registration certificate</li> <li>Reminding parent /carer of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence'</li> <li>Notifying parent /carer that the child's attendance is being monitored and of the duration of the monitoring period.</li> <li>Welcoming the parent /carer to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further.</li> </ul> <p>Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>Parents / Carers have received a Stage 2 letter and attendance remains of concern.</p>	<p>Letter 3 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing parent /carer of ongoing concern about attendance</li> <li>• Informing the parent /carer of current attendance</li> <li>• Enclosing a registration certificate</li> <li>• Reminding parent /carer of their legal responsibilities and the definition of 'persistent absence'</li> <li>• Requesting that the parent /carer provide medical evidence of absence for illness, to enable the school to consider the authorisation of absence.</li> <li>• Inviting parent /carer to an appointment with the Attendance Lead on a specific date, with the purpose of discussing attendance, agreeing an action plan of support, considering whether it may be appropriate to involve outside agencies, and setting an internal school attendance target.</li> <li>• Notifying parent /carer that should they chose not to attend, the meeting may take place without them and a target set.</li> </ul>
<p>4</p>	<p>Parents / Carers have failed an internal school attendance target and attendance is below the level of Persistent Absence (90%)</p>	<p>Letter 4 will be sent to parents / carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing parent /carer of ongoing concern about attendance</li> <li>• Informing the parent /carer of attendance during the target period.</li> <li>• Enclosing a registration certificate</li> <li>• Notifying parent /carer that the school intends to discuss their child's attendance with its Education Casework Officer, of the Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Service's Traded Service, and may make a formal referral.</li> </ul>
<p>4</p>	<p>During a monitoring period, attendance improves.</p>	<p>A Letter of Recognition will be sent to parent /carer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing the parent /carer of attendance during the monitoring period.</li> <li>• Notifying parent /carer that the school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure sustained improvement.</li> </ul>