

# Altrincham CE Primary School

## Attendance and Absence Policy



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<b>Ratified by Governors</b>	
<b>Signature of Chair of Governors</b>	
<b>Reviewed</b>	
<b>Date of next review</b>	<b>June 2024</b>

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## **Statement of intent**

Altrincham CE Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are absent for more than 10 days after an, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive days and the school and LA does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

### **3. Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

**Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

**Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

### **Persistent absenteeism:**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

## **4. Training of staff**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

## **5. Pupil expectations**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, 96 percent throughout the year

## **6. Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)**

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Having a monthly whole school attendance review.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
  - Creating attendance clinics.

The Governing Body will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead monthly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

## **7. Absence procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office.

Before 10am each morning, school will have accounted for all pupils who are absent. When the school office has not been notified, they will initiate a 'First Response' procedure with a telephone call home to parents to establish the safety and well-being of the child as well as the reason for absence. They will continue to try and establish contact with parents by telephone and email. If this is unsuccessful, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will make a home visit. They will be chaperoned for safeguarding purposes. In the case of Looked After Children and those with cases open to Social Services, when contact cannot be made or there are concerns around the reason for absence/ the safety and wellbeing of pupils, Trafford's First Response and Social Workers will be notified.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Head Teacher. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 96%, the Head Teacher will be informed, and a first formal letter will be sent to the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

## **8. Parental involvement**

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services, Trafford Attendance Officers.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

## **9. Attendance register**

Class Teachers will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday



- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## **10. Attendance officer (Head Teacher)**

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the Head Teacher who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Head Teacher has the power to issue sanctions such as penalty notices to parents.

The Head Teacher will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

## **11. Lateness**

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

The school day starts at 8:55am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by 9:10am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 9:20am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- After lunch, registers are marked by 1:05pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

- The register closes at 1:05pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- Pupils attending after 9:20am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## **12. Term-time leave**

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the Head Teacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The Head Teacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Head Teacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The Head Teacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head Teacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

## **13. Leave during lunch times**

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Head Teacher – it is at the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time. The Head Teacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Our lunch time hours are 12:05pm - 1:05pm.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to allow them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.

The Head Teacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will

be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Head Teacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Head Teacher.

Permission will be updated on a half termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

## **14. Missing children**

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they are collected by an adult. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Head Teacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Head Teacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - The library
  - The school grounds
  - Break out spaces
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Head Teacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behavioural Policy.

The Head Teacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

## **15. Religious observances**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## **16. Appointments**

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a telephone call should be made to the school office or a note and appointment card should be provided.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **17. Young carers**

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

## **18. Rewarding good attendance**

Good attendance and punctuality may be rewarded in the following ways

- Postcards home
- Certificates
- Stickers
- Extra playtimes
- Celebration assemblies

## **19. Monitoring and review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Head Teacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is June 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

## **Attendance During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

All pupils are required to attend school. As such, the arrangements set out in the main body of this policy (above) will be adhered to. This appendix has been developed in line with the latest government [guidance](#) to set out the additional measures that have been put in place to support pupils' attendance at school.

The school will have due regard for the DfE's '[Recording attendance during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)' guidance when recording attendance during the pandemic.

### **1. Attendance expectations**

Attendance is mandatory for all pupils. This means the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures in the main body of this policy.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the LA's code of conduct.

The school will ensure pupils do not attend the school site where they are displaying symptoms of, or have tested positive for, coronavirus, or are quarantining following travel abroad, or are in a household, childcare or support bubble with an individual who is displaying symptoms of, or has tested positive for, coronavirus.

### **2. Shielding or self-isolating pupils**

The school will stay up-to-date with all relevant national and local public health advice regarding shielding and self-isolation, communicating any relevant changes to all stakeholders.

Absences relating to pupils following clinical and/or public health advice will not be penalised. Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they will be immediately offered access to remote learning, in line with the Pupil Remote Learning Policy.

Absences due to shielding or self-isolation will be recorded with Code X. The school will request a copy of a shielding pupil's medical letter to confirm their status where necessary.

The school will follow the measures set out in the Infection Control Policy in all circumstances where self-isolation is required.

Where a vulnerable pupil is required to self-isolate, the school will notify their social worker (if they have one), ensure a method of maintaining contact with the pupil, and ensure the pupil has access to remote education.

### **3. Reluctance to return to school**

The school will remind parents of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school, and parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.

If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.

### **4. Monitoring attendance**

The attendance officer will monitor the school's attendance rates once the school is open to all pupils in September. Any trends in non-attendance will be identified (e.g. due to anxiety) and measures will be put in place to reengage affected pupils with the school.

The school will place particular emphasis on supporting the attendance and re-engagement of vulnerable pupils, pupils at risk of PA, and pupils who have not engaged regularly with school during the coronavirus pandemic.

An agreed member of the SLT will complete the '[Educational setting status form](#)' on a daily basis, based on the information on the attendance register.

The school will use the DfE's list of sub-codes in the management information system (MIS) to record non-attendance related to coronavirus. These are:

- Code X01: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
- Code X02: Pupil self-isolating with coronavirus symptoms
- Code X03: Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus inside the school setting
- Code X04: Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus outside the school setting
- Code X05: Pupil required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)
- Code X06: Pupil not in school because they have been advised specifically by their doctor or public health authority that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and should not attend school
- Code X07: Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out in government guidance
- Code I01: Non-coronavirus related illness
- Code I02: Illness (confirmed case of coronavirus)

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Altrincham CE Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and attendance officer detailing monthly attendance to date.
2. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the Head Teacher daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard and that their attendance is now being monitored.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a further letter is sent home and the Head Teacher arranges a meeting with parents to discuss this.
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored and, if attendance does not improve and/or if parents are unwilling to cooperate, a referral will be made to the local education welfare officer (EWO).
8. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents. If there is no improvement, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.
9. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.