



POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE FOR ALEXANDRA INFANT SCHOOL & ALEXANDRA JUNIOR SCHOOL

We aim to create a happy, secure, inclusive and challenging environment in which all members of the schools can grow in self-esteem, developing their potential as healthy human beings.

The schools are dedicated to:

- High quality educational provision for all children and the pursuit of the development of children who are confident communicators, committed and reflective learners and thoughtful in their care of others.
- The development of a safe environment which encourages a sense of community and partnership amongst children, parents, staff and governors.

We are committed to equal opportunities and will stand firm in the rejection of all prejudice irrespective of race, creed, colour or gender.

Statement of Intent

We expect all children to attend school every day, when school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. We encourage all children to have a positive attitude to school, we strive to make our school a happy place to be and reward good attendance. We support children and their families who, for whatever reasons are prevented from attending school. Our Educational Welfare Officer provides additional support and advice for all families, assisting in removing any barriers which prevent good attendance.

Legal Framework

This policy has been written with due regard to statutory legislation including but not limited to the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education (Pupil registration) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2014) School Attendance

Under the Education (Pupil registration) Regulations Act, the Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that the school keeps a register of pupils attendance at the start of the morning session and afternoon session of the school day, and the register will indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised .

Principles:

Good attendance and punctuality at school facilitates a good education. Children's social skills are also enhanced by regular attendance.

Aims:

- To share the responsibility for promoting school attendance amongst everyone in the School and the broader school community.
- To show all parents that unjustified and unauthorised absence will be noticed and challenged and why it is unacceptable both for the child's education and protection.
- To develop and implement an effective attendance policy that touches all aspects of the School's life, and relates directly to the School's values, ethos and curriculum.
- To strive to make learning experiences enjoyable in order to encourage all pupils to attend well reach their true potential.
- To develop children to become independent learners who value learning with and from others and have a positive attitude to life-long learning and a good work ethic.

Policy into Practice

This attendance policy and its implementation will encourage all pupils to attend school regularly by the implementation of specific measures, e.g.

- Registering pupils accurately and efficiently.
- Contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised.
- Regularly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Reporting school attendance statistics to parents, LA and DofE as appropriate.
- Reinforcing good attendance and to encourage improved attendance by using such measures as:
 - a. Informal comments from staff;
 - b. By the more formal strategy of issuing attendance information letters to parents
 - c. Involving the EWO;
 - d. Celebrating with the issue of termly attendance certificates.
 - e. Celebrating attendance at a weekly Assembly.
 - f. Celebrating attendance by displaying weekly class attendance and whole school attendance in school and through the newsletter,
 - g. Individual 100% attendance for the previous week displayed in the hall at both schools.
 - h. Whole school attendance displayed at the front entrance door of each school and displayed on the classroom doors at AJS and the "Rockets" at AIS..
 - i. Involving the Home School Link Worker at an early stage and, when appropriate to do so involve other agencies.
 - j. Monitor and evaluate this policy and its implementation by, amongst other means, rigorously collecting and analysing data about attendance to check our progress against measurable outcomes.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

PARENTS:

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary statutory responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly. In addition to statutory obligations parents have all signed the Home-School agreement – a section of which describes the agreed responsibilities of the parents.

The school recognises the fact that, due to the age of the children at our schools, attendance is not the responsibility of the children themselves, and consequently, staff will not sanction the children for absence or for being late.

The Home-School Agreement clearly states that it is the responsibility of parents to:

- *Ensure your child arrives on time and is collected on time by a known responsible adult (Nursery to Year 4 . . Year 5 and 6 children will be allowed to walk home alone with the written permission of parents / Carers.*
- *Ensure that your child attends regularly and notify school on the first day of any absence – this is for the child's security as well as administrative reasons.*
- *Work with the School and Education Welfare Service to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence.*
- *No holidays to be taken in term time.*

To discharge their agreed responsibilities parents should always:

- Encourage good attendance making sure that their child goes to school regularly, arrives on time and keeps to the school's rules.
- Take an interest in their child's school work.
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance.
- Co-operate with the School staff and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to make sure their child overcomes his or her attendance problems.
- Discuss planned absences with the school and fill in a leave of absence form well in advance, if they wish it to be considered.

Illness, medical and dental appointments:

- Parents are asked to make appointments out of school hours. A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and EWOs can consult the School Health Service, or the pupil's GP.

Exceptional circumstances

- The School responds sensitively to special situations or requests. Situations such as family bereavement will be considered under the remit of "exceptional circumstances". If such absences become long term or more frequent, the school may wish to suggest to the parents that alternative arrangements should be made, which are less detrimental to the child's education. In cases of this type

the school's EWO may be able to help the parent to make alternative arrangements.

- Under education law parents may request absence for pupils under exceptional circumstances and proof will be required. The Federated Governing Body of Alexandra Infants' School and Alexandra Junior School will take such requests into consideration but have decided that **no holidays during term time will be authorised.**
- If the pupil goes on holiday in spite of the school policy then the absence is unauthorised. If a child is absent from school for more than 20 days without good reason i.e. illness, the pupil will be taken off roll and parents will have to re-apply for a place at the school by contacting the LA Admissions Team.
- Any requests for absence of leave under special circumstances must be made to the Head Teacher and a meeting will be arranged with a member of the senior leadership team and/or the EWO.

Approved educational activities off-site:

The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities.

LA & EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICE (EWS):

It is a legal requirement that parents meet their statutory responsibilities either by registering the child at a school or by making other effective educational arrangements. If a child is registered as a pupil at a particular school, that school must give permission for a child to be absent.

If a child does not go to the school at which he or she is registered, the LA can take legal action against the parents. Legal powers to enforce attendance are:

- **School Attendance Orders** – these enforce the parents' responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive suitable education.
- **Prosecution** for irregular attendance - this can result in parents being given a fixed penalty fine for each child who is not going to school, or even sent to prison.
- **Parenting Orders** – these are court orders which require certain actions to be taken by parents with the purpose of improving pupil attendance, e.g. parents may be required to attend counselling or guidance sessions or to ensure that their child is escorted to and from school.
- **Education Supervision Orders** - this means that the court appoints a supervisor to help and give advice to the Parents and the child.

EWOs (Education Welfare Officers) are employed to monitor school attendance and to assist parents in meeting their responsibilities.

Our schools named EWO responsible for the attendance of all the pupils is **Mrs Debbie Dutton.**

- The EWO checks registers regularly to ensure that they are being completed in accordance with the school's policy and to identify any patterns of absence . The EWO promptly follows up incidents where members of staff have identified a possible attendance problem where a child's attendance falls below 90%.
- The EWO works closely with the school and with families to resolve attendance issues, arranging home visits where necessary. The school's Home School Link Worker will accompany the EWO on home visits whenever possible.

THE GOVERNING BODY:

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and that it does not discriminate on any grounds including but not limited to ethnicity, cultural, religious, gender disability or sexual orientation. It is legally responsible for many aspects of school management including the attendance register. However, the Head teacher manages the day-to-day running of the School and in so doing takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy.

THE HEADTEACHER:

It is the Head teacher's responsibility to inform the EWO if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised. The Head teacher can, of course, notify the EWO earlier if there are areas of concern. Normally the School itself will have made and recorded efforts to address the non-attendance through:

- Action by the Home School Link Worker as part of their day-to-day duties. The school keeps detailed records of actions taken regarding persistently absent children.
- Involvement of others within the School, e. g. Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, School Business Manager.
- Contact with parents on the first day of absence via our text messaging service, telephone call or home visit if there is no response to the text
- Involvement of outside agencies e.g. Traveller Service.

Referral to the EWO would normally take place if:

- A pattern of irregular attendance or lateness is either continuing or worsening.
- Parents do not accept their responsibilities for ensuring the child attends school and are refusing to discuss ways of improving attendance with the School.
- Unjustified absence is increasingly a problem.
- Parents ask for excessive authorised absence.

The EWO has a legal responsibility to become involved if a child has record of persistent absence (10%) and will take action if a child's absence falls below 90%. However, the Governing Body have decided to purchase an extra support package in order to improve attendance at school which means that our EWO will monitor the attendance patterns of all of our children including those of non –statutory school age in order to develop good punctuality and attendance habits.

It is the Head teacher's responsibility to monitoring attendance and keep parents informed of their child's attendance and absence. In order to do this the Head teacher has put into practice the following procedure:

The school has adopted a "traffic light policy" to notify parents about their child's absence. This system will begin after the first 4 weeks of the Autumn Term and will be repeated every 4 weeks, and comprises of the following:

- If attendance falls below 96% a yellow letter is sent to parents warning that attendance is falling.
- If attendance doesn't improve then a second yellow letter is sent inviting parents in to discuss issues with the Head teacher and or Home School Link Worker.
- If attendance reaches as low as 90% an orange letter is sent inviting parents to a meeting and advising them that attendance will be expected to improve over the next 4 weeks. They will be informed that their child is classed as a PA child (Persistent Absentee). If attendance should fall between 85% and 89% a red letter is sent to parents requesting an urgent meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to support an improvement in attendance. The EWO will also be notified and asked to attend the meeting.

The Head teacher is also required to maintain two registers:

- An admission register (known as the school roll) which contains a list of all pupils at the School;
- An attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age on the admission register. This must be taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
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The Head teacher is also responsible for:

- Contacting parents as soon as possible when unexplained absence occurs (phone, and/or letter, home visits or via the Home School Link Worker)
- Contacting parents to request an explanation verbally or by a written note explaining the absence - where no reply is received, a further letter will be sent from the Head teacher warning that unless the absence is explained it will have to be recorded as unauthorised.
- Issuing to individual pupils any reward earned as part of the school's attendance policy.
- Having general oversight of the attendance statistics and for monitoring these statistics on a regular basis including comparing them to any national attendance targets. This will include; whole school data, key stage, year group and class data as well as data on vulnerable groups and by ethnicity.
- Producing attendance data for reports to the Governors.
- Monitoring the smooth operation of the school's registration system and bringing about any necessary changes to ensure its smooth and efficient operation.
- Introducing remedial action to correct any identified problems of general school attendance.
- Monitoring attendance figures below 96% closely with a view to identifying pupils whose attendance is decreasing.
- Overseeing the School's reward system as it relates to attendance.

- Meeting with parents of pupils whose attendance is falling below 90% and discussing the causes of falling attendance.
- meeting regularly with the EWO to discuss the school's general attendance statistics and individual pupils attendance when:
 - a) A pupil's attendance is slipping (towards 90%) and so giving concern which might warrant urgent EWO involvement
 - b) A pupil has been referred to the EWO
 - c) A pupil is officially on the school roll but transfer to the school has not taken place.
 - d) A pupil has left the school but not enrolled at another school
- It is the Head teacher's responsibility to ensure that a clear policy on attendance is in place, which is known to staff, pupils and parents.
- Each year, the School is required to submit to the DCSF details of the level of absence within the School. The report details how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence.
- The school Newsletters are used as a means of reminding parents of their responsibility regarding attendance and of informing them of year group attendance on a termly basis.
- A copy of this Attendance Policy is on our school websites.

CLASS TEACHER:

The class teacher is responsible for completing the register and monitoring pupils' attendance in an attempt to identify irregular patterns of attendance, e. g:

- Where a pupil's attendance is falling below 96%.
- Where a pupil's attendance shows regular absences (i.e. absent every Wednesday)
- Where a pupil is arriving late for registration on a regular basis.

ADMISSION AND ATTENDANCE REGISTERS

Registers should be treated as legal documents – indeed they may be used as evidence in court cases. The register also provides a daily record of attendance for all pupils, information which can act as an early warning related to a number of child protection issues and the information they contain can be used as part of pupils' end of term report. For these reasons they are retained for a minimum of three years.

Keeping an attendance register

For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register **must** clearly differentiate between whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised by the School.

Authorised Absence:

- Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Head teacher or in the absence of the Head teacher, a senior member of staff- this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. The fact that the parent has written a letter explaining the pupil's absence does not in itself authorise the absence that decision rests with the school. Any

authorised absence will be agreed on an individual basis. Medical or dentist appointment which unavoidably fall during school time will be granted authorisation but this must always be avoided wherever possible absence.

Unauthorised Absence:

- Unauthorised absence is classified as absence without permission from school without the permission of the School and a parent- this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences, e.g. where the parent has not provided a reason or provided a reason that the school does not believe warranted the absence. The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- Unauthorised absence will also be given where a child's rate of absence is such that it is a cause for concern for school. The expected rate is 97%. In these cases the decision may be taken away from the Head teacher not to authorise any further absences from school until further information has been sought e.g. medical evidence. It is the parent's responsibility when requests of this nature are made by the school to provide this information to them. This information may be invaluable to the school as it may provide further support for the child with an on – going medical condition. All absence will be closely monitored by the school and EWO on a weekly basis and swift intervention taken in order to improve the attendance rates of individuals. Arrival at school after the register has closed is also counted as unauthorised absence. The morning register closes at 9:30 a.m. The afternoon register closes at 1:30 p.m.

Punctuality:

- Frequent lateness of pupils can provide grounds for prosecution of parents. School starts at 9:00 each day when the register is taken. Any child not present when the register is taken will be marked absent. The School allows the register to be kept open for up to 30 minutes from the beginning of registration. This means that the register will close at 9:30 every day. However, in the case of known delays such as bus breakdowns or severe weather the register may be kept open for longer.

Late after the register closes:

- Should a pupil arrive after the normal period of registration has ended he/she should report to the school office to be marked present, this will automatically be recorded as a late mark. The child's name is then entered into the "Children Late for School" book kept in the office. This book is regularly monitored by the Head teacher and Office Manager and the Head teacher contacts parents of children who are persistently late.
- If the pupil arrives after 9:30 they will be marked as late after the register closed. For legal purposes this can be regarded as an unauthorised absence, unless the parents have provided an acceptable reason, e.g. dental appointment.
- Parents are required to bring in appointment cards for medical appointments during school time.

Temporary school closures:

- .Advice will always be sought from the EWO in these exceptional circumstances.

Absence Procedures:

- When a child is absent unexpectedly the class teacher will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office. Parents are expected to inform the school office before 9:30 of this absence for the morning session and by 1:30p.m. for the afternoon session. Absence should be reported every day unless previously stated that a child will be absent for a number of days. Should there be no contact from parents then contact will attempted to be made by the school to find out the reason for the child's absence via the school's first day call system. The Home School Link Worker and/or EWO may decide to visit the home.
- Parents are encouraged to send a note to school on the previous day should parent know of an absence the next day such as a medical appointment. All medical appointments in school time will only be authorised with the correct evidence provided e.g. letter from the hospital, dental or doctor's appointment card. Appointments during the school day should be in exceptional cases.
- If a child is absent during the school day they will be unable to take part in any extracurricular activities or events run after school or in the evening of the day they in which they were absent. The only exception to this would be where a child has had leave from school granted as an exceptional circumstance e.g. to attend a family funeral.

Long Term Absence

- When children are absent from school with an absence from an illness of more than 5 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 attempt to make arrangements for tuition outside school should this be deemed to be an appropriate course of action.

Repeated unauthorised absence

- If repeated unauthorised absence occurs, the school in conjunction with the EWO will take the necessary action which could result in prosecution should the situation not improve following the support and advice of the school and EWO. Legal action is always the last resort but will be taken should parents not take full responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Attendance Targets

- The school has an attendance target of 97% for each child. This is a challenging yet realistic target and is the target set by the government for all schools.

Rewards for good attendance

- All children who achieve 100% attendance for the school year will receive a special prize and certificate for their exceptional effort. The prize will only be awarded if no sessions are missed regardless of reason or circumstance.

- Certificates will be awarded at the end of each term for those children who have achieved 100% (Gold), 99% (Silver) and 98 % (Bronze) attendance.
- The children at the Junior school can earn an extra playtime if their class has the best attendance for the week.
- The children at the Infant school can earn points to spend at the class shop (Appendix 1)

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW:

- The School will review its policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.
- Effective monitoring/evaluation of the policy and its implementation is dependent upon the maintenance of accurate and up to date records.
- The School Attendance policy is promoted and implemented throughout the School and staff, pupils and parents are regularly reminded of its contents.
- The school will keep accurate records on file for a minimum of three years.
- The criteria by which the monitoring and evaluation of the School Attendance policy is undertaken are described below:

PARENTS:

It will monitor :

- The degree to which the pupils and parents have been consulted during the formation and implementation of relevant policies;
- Any pertinent feedback from parents;
- Regular updating of the information pack for parents;
- The amount of data and information given to parents regarding the attendance rates of their children and their peers.

HEAD TEACHER

It will monitor:

- How the Head teacher and Senior Leaders of the school, closely monitor the attendance of individuals, groups of pupils and the whole school and take appropriate action when necessary to do so.
- How the Home School Worker works closely with Senior Leaders in actively promoting good attendance, removes barriers where possible to do so and monitor attendance closely, particularly any trends or patterns of significance.

CLASS TEACHERS

It will monitor:

The role class teachers take in being responsible for monitoring the attendance of their class and individuals and how concerns are raised with the child's parent and Home School Link Worker in the first instance and then if felt necessary Senior Leaders and/or the EWO.

GOVERNORS

It will monitor:

- The responsibility governors take in monitoring attendance annual report from the Head teacher.
- The governors have a responsibility for this policy and its implementation.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES & LA:

It will monitor:

- The effectiveness of a partnership approach, making full and appropriate use of the experience and expertise of all agencies with relevant skills, e.g. the Education Welfare and Educational Psychology Services, voluntary organisations and the private sector wherever appropriate

BUDGET:

It will monitor:

- Any appropriate adjustments in budget allocation to reflect changing needs.

PLANNING:

It will monitor:

- The consideration of attendance issues in “Improvement Planning” .

STAFF CPD:

It will monitor:

- Involvement by all staff in Professional development courses relating to attendance issues.
- Senior Management Team involvement in attendance issues
- Any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected pupils and those responsible for teaching them.

Policy reviewed: Annually

APPENDIX 1

ATTENDANCE REWARD SYSTEM SEPTEMBER 2016

- All children will have an Attendance Record card
- Each day they come to school on time they will receive a point (sticker).
- Once a child has accumulated 10 points they will be able to go to the Attendance “Shop” and exchange their points for items.
- If they spend all their points they will need to get more before they can buy something, but this time they don’t need to wait until they have 10 points before they can start spending.
- Some items in the shop will only cost 5 points, some 10, some 15 etc. If children see something that they would like in the shop and they haven’t got enough points then they will be encouraged to save their points until they have enough.
- There will also be Gold, Silver and Bronze certificates at the end of each half term for those children who have 100%, 99% and 98% attendance respectively.