

ALDER COPPICE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Achievement through Commitment

Attendance Policy

Policy for the Attention of			
Audience	Key Audience	Optional Audience	Additional/Notes
Senior Leadership Team	✓		
Teachers	✓		
Teaching Assistants	✓		
Administrative Staff	✓		
Curriculum Support			
Lunchtime Supervisors			
Site Manager			
Cleaners			
Governors	✓		
Parents	✓		
Website	✓		
Local Authority		✓	

Attendance Matters

Rationale

Alder Coppice Primary School is committed to providing a quality education for all its pupils. For this to be successful and for your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school on time and every day possible (unless they are genuinely ill).

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the School gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that the School is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.”

Working Together to improve school attendance August 2024

Introduction and Context

We believe that;

- Improving attendance is everyone’s business
- All absence, in any year group, affects access to the curriculum which may ultimately impact on a child’s progress.
- Repeated and consistent lateness is an unsettling start to the School day for both the child and others in the School.

The Government expects:

Schools to:

- rigorously track local attendance data

Local Authorities to:

- have a School Attendance Support Team to provide the following functions:
 - communicate key messages to schools
 - hold conversations with schools and agree targeted actions and access to services
 - provide access to Early Help Workers to work intensively with families
 - to take forward attendance legal intervention where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with

Parents to:

- perform their legal duty by ensuring their children are registered at a school and attend regularly;

What the Law says about school attendance

By law all children of compulsory school age (between age 5 and 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996 requires children and young people of compulsory school age to regularly attend the School at which he/she is on roll. It states if ‘the parent knows that his/her child is failing to attend regularly at school without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence’. Upon conviction you may be fined up to £2,500 per parent, per child and/or up to 3 months’ imprisonment. If you wish further information please see (SA&ESS) School Attendance and Education Support Service

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- To attend school regularly
- To attend registration promptly for both morning and afternoon sessions
- To arrive at lessons on time
- Be prepared for the School day and dressed in the correct School uniform and bring in relevant items (e.g. book bag, reading book, PE Kit, Homework, water bottle).

Parents and Carers

- To ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually and properly equipped and in a fit state to learn every day that the School is open to pupils.
- To notify the School as soon as possible every day of absence by 9.15am. (01384 816610) unless circumstances specify that a child must be off for a longer period. (For example, 48 hours for sickness and diarrhoea).
- To follow the NHS Guidance, Is My Child Too Ill for School, when deciding whether their child should attend school
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>
- To take family holidays in the School holiday period and not to take holidays during term time.
- To book any medical appointments around the School day wherever possible.
- To provide the School with up-to-date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility and or care of their child.
- If a “Leave of Absence” is required for exceptional circumstances, it must be made in writing on the correct Form to the Assistant Headteacher, Mrs J Randall, **at least 10 school days** in advance of the proposed start date of the absence. The Form can be obtained from the School Website or the main Admin/Reception at the ‘leaflets for parents’ section. Parents should not assume that returning the Form guarantees that the absence request will be approved and should bear this in mind before booking holidays or attendance at other events.

If a “Leave of Absence” is to be requested, it must be for **exceptional circumstances**. The circumstances that you consider to be “exceptional” must be detailed and made in writing to the Assistant Headteacher as detailed above.

- Work with school and/or the Local Authority to help them understand the barriers to their child’s attendance and to proactively engage in any support offered.

The Education Act 1996 defines a Parent as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has Parental Responsibility for a child; and
- Any person who has care of a child, i.e. lives with and looks after a child.

Teaching and Support Staff

- To keep accurate, timely and up-to-date attendance registers.
- To help celebrate pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor pupil absence.
- Liaise with the Admin Team and parents over punctuality, absence, collection of children and relay messages promptly.
- Inform the Assistant Headteacher of any concerns regarding attendance/absence and when it may be affecting achievement.

Senior Leadership Team

- To have a named member of the Senior Leadership Team with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. This is **Assistant Headteacher – Mrs Joanne Randall**.
- Have a clear school Attendance Policy which all staff, pupils and parents can access.
- To set clear and challenging attendance targets.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- To intervene when an individual pupil's attendance/absence gives cause for concern.
- Wherever possible, build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop, where appropriate, a multi-agency response to the attendance agenda, including working collaboratively with other schools.
- Utilise the support of available specialists in relation to supporting attendance.
- Liaise with the Education Support Service as appropriate when support is not working or parents do not engage with help and support offered.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

- Ensure that staff receive adequate training about attendance as part of the continued professional development for all staff.
- To report to the Governing Board on Attendance Matters.

Administrative Staff

- To help the Assistant Headteacher monitor attendance.
- To monitor and record late entrants, including the reasons for lateness and adjust Pupil Asset accordingly.
- To have robust daily processes to follow up first day absence.
- To forward messages about absence to relevant staff.
- To handle administration of “Leave of Absence” requests.
- To monitor register codings and alert staff to inconsistencies. See Appendix 1.
- To produce individual, group, class, year group and whole school analysis and summary sheets as required.
- To liaise with the Assistant Headteacher over attendance and punctuality as appropriate.
- To produce attendance figures and summaries for Annual Reports.
- Ensure the change report within Pupil Asset is activated at the beginning of the academic year.

Safeguarding in Education

All staff at Alder Coppice Primary School are aware that like attendance, “Safeguarding is everyone’s business”. We all play a crucial role in protecting children and young people and keeping them safe or helping them to feel safe. OFSTED under Section 5, make judgements in relation to the effectiveness of Safeguarding. Alder Coppice Primary School recognises its legal duty under Section 157 and 175 of The Education Act 2002, to work together with other agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Our school has a clear “Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy” which takes into account the “Working Together to Safeguard Children” and “Keeping Children Safe” and is reviewed annually and ensures that all staff including governors and volunteers have undertaken appropriate training with regard to safeguarding. All staff are aware of their responsibilities to inform the designated Safeguarding Lead and the Local Authority of children who are persistently absent or missing or any children they intend to remove from the School’s roll.

The Education Support Service (ESS):

Once a referral is received from school due to unauthorised absence, the ESS will carry out statutory duties on behalf of the LA which may result in the following:

- A Warning Notice being issued for unauthorised absence
- A Fixed Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence or if a child is seen in a Public Place during school hours whilst excluded
- Legal proceedings being undertaken for non-school attendance
- Apply for a Parenting Order
- Apply for an Education Supervision Order
- A parent agreement
- An attendance order
- Advice and support being given to the school over Attendance Issues

Penalty Notices:

If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive. This can also include unauthorised absences accrued for being late after registration has closed.

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school where they have registered, or in some cases, an alternative provision.

A Penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences.

From September 2024, Penalty Notices are increasing to £160. If this is the first Penalty Notice issued, it can be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Any second Penalty Notice, to the same parent of the same child, issued within three years of the first notice, will be charged at a flat rate of £160.

A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child – alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.

The School will work with parents/carers and the Local Authority to support the Improving of Attendance and this can be an early warning communication with a Joint Early Warning Notice.

In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued. However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on the School's Website or a simple warning by the School that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

Types of Absence:

Authorised Absence from School

An authorised absence may be granted at the discretion of the Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher where there are exceptional circumstances. Each application will be judged individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and background context. Where granted, the School will determine the number of days.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where the School is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Reporting Absences

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the School of their child's unexpected absence as soon as possible. Parents must either telephone or e-mail school on the first day of absence. If your child is ill, the School should be notified of the nature of the illness and when your child is expected to be able to return to school.

Please note that if we have not been contacted by you, it is part of our school policy for a member of the Admin Team to contact parents on the first day of absence to enquire about your child's absence, which also ensures that your child is safe and has not set out to School and failed to arrive. If we are unable to contact to ascertain the whereabouts of your child, this may be followed up by a text message, or a further phone call from the Assistant Headteacher. Where we are not able to gain a response, a visit to the child's address will be made, and/or you may be called to attend a Welfare Meeting to discuss the importance of contact and to consider any barriers to the child's attendance. If your child is absent for a longer period of time, it is important that you keep us updated with your child's progress and to let us know when we may expect a child back in school.

Visits to properties by members of school staff may also take place. These may be welfare checks or if it is felt that the reasons provided for absence may not be correct or misleading and need to be substantiated then for safeguarding reasons we will try and verify the reasons for attendance. If children are not in school we need to know that they are safe.

Planned Absences

Like all Local Authorities Dudley are concerned about the disruption planned absences in term time cause to a child's education. The key message is that good consistent attendance at school is crucial to giving a child the best chance of success and in fulfilling their true potential.

The School Term and Holiday Dates are published in January for the forthcoming academic year (September – August) giving plenty of advanced notice for parents of when school holidays occur.

The School publishes a Diary of Events informing parents of important dates and key events for each term. This includes, where relevant, details of Assessment Weeks for year groups, as well as the week of the statutory end of Key Stage Tests for Year 6 pupils. Please note that requests for absences will not be authorised during these weeks as it is vitally important children are in School to take part in these summative assessments.

Leave of Absence - Request for Permission for Absence during Term Time

There is no automatic right or entitlement for parents to take children out of school term time.

2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations make clear that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during Term time, unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday an exceptional circumstance.

For Holidays

- If a request is made for a holiday during term time there will need to be exceptional reasons as to why the holiday cannot be taken during the 14 weeks of school holidays.
- A holiday taken without permission from School will be classed as an unauthorised **absence and if taken over 10 consecutive sessions, will be automatically subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Education Investigation Service.**
- It must be emphasised that holidays taken in term time can be disruptive to a child's education. Children are put at a disadvantage by missing days/weeks of what is a carefully structured programme of work.

Breach of Trust

If the School has reasons or evidence to believe that a child has been removed from learning and a false reason given for their non-attendance, School will consider this as a “Breach of Trust” and will, therefore, refuse to accept/authorise any future reasons given for non-attendance for the remainder of that academic year. If there is evidence that a child has been taken on a holiday for a duration of 10 consecutive sessions, then this will be referred to the Education Investigation Service for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Deciding whether to grant a request

- Each case will be reviewed individually.
- The School will usually respond in writing within 8 working days of receipt of the Form informing you whether your request has been authorised as an exceptional circumstance.
- Should the School decide to grant the leave of absence but, the child does not return to school at the time he/she is expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the School to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, his/her place at the School could be withdrawn.
- Should the School decide not to grant the leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- **Leave of Absence Requests must be made by the parent/carers with whom the child normally resides.**

Other Circumstances - Leave of Absence may be given for a child to attend a very special occasion, such as a close family wedding, funeral or award ceremony.

Children should never be absent from school for the purpose of shopping trips, looking after younger children/parents or birthdays or “days out”.

As each case is considered individually, it is not acceptable to assume that your child can have days out of school for the following:

- Moving house
- Funerals
- New babies
- Holidays attached to family weddings
- Other child in the family is sick and parent cannot get other child to school.
- Parent on holiday and child staying with a relative and the relative cannot get child to school. It is expected that other suitable arrangements are made with family/neighbours/friends to bring your child and collect your child from school.
- Inclement weather i.e. snow, when school remains open.
- Because it is more convenient for the parent/carer.

Authorising Absence

Authorised absence will be granted when it can be demonstrated that:

1. The child was given permission for leave of absence by the School.
2. The child was ill or prevented from attendance by any unavoidable cause.
3. The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong.
4. A pupil has a genuine medical complaint for which we have received medical evidence from a health professional

Condoned Absence

It is all too easy for parents to phone in or write a letter to the School to cover a child's absence and in the majority of cases most parents are genuine in this regard, but sometimes because of a number of reasons this is not the case. Please understand that a school **does not** have to accept the reasons you give, and **only** the School can authorise the absence, it is not an automatic right.

Medical Absences/Illness

Appointments - may be given for the child to attend a medical or dental appointment. **As a matter of routine you may be asked to provide proof of an appointment.**

Obviously appointments should be made out of School hours whenever possible and should not normally require more than a few hours/half a day absence from School. Afternoon appointments, avoiding morning English and Maths lessons, are less disruptive to your child's education.

Please be aware that it is not automatic that the School will authorise medical/illness absences. Factors such as the amount of time a child has been absent during the preceding 12 months and any patterns of absence may be taken into account, along with what affect the absence may have on a child's achievement e.g. is the absence during a key time (such as revision, assessment).

Unless there are exceptional medical circumstances the School would not usually expect to authorise more than 10 days for illness/medical reasons for any one child in a 12-month period.

Part-time or reduced timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. However, sometimes this may need to be provided partially in school and partially in another setting, for example, where a child would benefit from attending a Speech and Language Unit for a period of time to receive specialist teaching.

In some circumstances, and in the child's best interests, we may need to implement a temporary part-time timetable just in school.

This will have:

- The agreement of school and parents
- A clear ambition and be part of any wider support, health care or integration plans.
- Have a regular review date and a proposed end-date, although this may be extended as required.

Pupils who have a designated Social Worker will also be made aware, and where pupils have an EHCP the Local Authority will also be notified.

Deletion from the School Roll

There are prescribed grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age can be deleted from the School roll under regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil, Registration) Regulations 2006 as amended 2016. Any deletion will be in agreement with the Local Authority.

Regular Attendance

The School expects all pupils to be punctual and in full time regular attendance at school for each session that the School is open and requires them to attend.

We use the following percentages to classify our attendance:

98%+ Excellent

95% - 97% Good

90 – 94% Poor

Below 90% Unsatisfactory – officially 'persistently absent. 90% is also the threshold for persistent used by the government.

Persistent Absence

Government regulations relating to attendance mean that a child becomes a "persistent absentee" if they miss **10%** or more of schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. Therefore, a pupil is considered to have persistent absence if their attendance falls below 90%. Absence at this level is likely to affect achievement.

This change came about partly because to have 85% attendance (the previous Persistent Absence Threshold) means a pupil had to be absent for 56 sessions (28 days) of school. This is a great deal of schooling to miss and, in the Government's opinion, sets the bar too low in this respect.

	15% Absence	10% Absence
Half-Term 1	10 or more sessions	7 or more sessions
Half-Term 1 - 2 (Autumn Term)	22 or more sessions	14 or more sessions
Half-Term 1 – 3	30 or more sessions	20 or more sessions
Half-Term 1 – 4 (Autumn and Spring Term combined)	38 or more sessions	25 or more sessions
Half-Term 1 – 5	46 or more sessions	31 or more sessions
Half-Term 1 – 6 Full academic year	56 or more sessions	38 or more sessions

If your child is deemed to be a Persistent Absentee you may be notified of this by letter. You may also be asked to attend an Attendance Matters Meeting with Mrs Randall to discuss the School's concerns and ways of improving attendance and/or punctuality. This may include the suggestion of Early Help and the guidance of a Family Support Worker. If you do not attend a requested meeting or refuse support, such as Early Help, and attendance and punctuality continues to decline, this may be used as evidence in a referral to the Education Support Service.

Registration Period and managing Punctuality

Start of the day – Registration

- ❖ Arrival slot - Years 1 - 6 need to arrive between 8.30am – 8.40am and must be in their class for 8.45am when the register is taken.

Registers are taken between 8.45am and 8.50am.

Children arriving at the gate 8.41am onwards are late to school.

Children arriving between 8.45am and 8.50am are marked late within registration. Children arriving after that time will be marked by the office as an unauthorised absence, as lessons will have started.

- ❖ Reception children should arrive between 8.35am and 8.45am.

The register is taken between 8.50am and 9am.

Children arriving at the gate 8.46am onwards are late to school.

Children arriving between 8.50am and 9am will be marked late within registration and children arriving after 9am will be recorded as unauthorised absences.

Parents of children who are late to school will receive a text message informing them of this.

Afternoon Registration

The afternoon Registration Period may be completed at any point during that session.

Registration happens in the classroom and not when a child arrives at school.

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children arrive at School on time. Any child arriving after the School's official starting time but during registration will be classified on the register as late during registration.

Any child arriving after registration closes will be classified as an **unauthorised absence**, as per the DFE guidance that arriving late for school, after the register has closed, is recorded as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Please note that we record children who are late into school and the reason for the lateness so these can be monitored.

Parents of children who are persistently late will be contacted by the School and may be asked to attend an Attendance Matters meeting and or may be referred to the Education Support Service.

Late within or After Registration

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child is in school on time. It is a parental duty to ensure that your child is in school and ready to begin learning at this time. Irrespective of how many seconds or minutes they are late, they are late. If a child is late you may receive an e-mail notifying you that they have been recorded as late on the register.

After a period of 10 or more lates, not due to medical or other approved circumstances, parents will receive a letter from the Assistant Headteacher notifying them of these lates, the reasons they have given for these and the need for improvement. You may also be asked to attend an Attendance Matters Meeting.

Unacceptable reasons for being late include:

- Traffic (unless we are notified of an accident, or extreme weather which affects the punctuality of a large number of pupils, in which case we will move the registration period back to accommodate this.
- Oversleeping
- Children not being able to leave electronic gadgets
- Time going too fast
- School clocks are wrong

The School gates are supervised from 8.20am each morning by members of staff and then gates open for entry. This provides an additional window for your child to be able to make their way into school on time.

If parents find that they are going to be late due to an unavoidable event, such as a road traffic accident, they should make contact and inform us of the situation as soon as is practicable.

Rewarding Attendance and Punctuality

The School values attendance and punctuality and promotes this in Key Stage 2 through the Attendance Premier League, Classopoly, Amazon Experience and 100% Club. Achievements are reported back to the children in regular Attendance Matters Assemblies and winning classes earn rewards such as additional playtime or other small treats as agreed by our Captains and Vice-Captains and the Assistant Headteacher. Results of these will be published regularly on the School Website, newsletters and the School's Facebook page, as well as our Attendance Matters newsletters.

Working with Parents

We aim to work collaboratively with families and local partners to treat the root causes of and remove barriers to absence and poor punctuality.

This will be achieved through the following steps as taken from **Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024**.

EXPECT

We aspire to high standards of attendance and punctuality from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can and want to be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR

We will rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve this before it becomes entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

Where a pattern or concern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree to how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside school. This might include an Early Help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly, and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention; a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Attendance summaries for each child are sent out at least twice each year; mid-way through the academic year and then again with a child's Annual Report in the Summer Term. Where there is a concern regarding attendance and punctuality additional information may be sent detailing the information we have about particular absences or lates at other points during the year.

We actively encourage parents who know that they are struggling with attendance and punctuality issues to contact Mrs Randall to discuss this as soon as possible in order to resolve these issues, before any additional action is required to be taken.

UK GDPR

This Policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review the School's Data Protection Policy published on the School Website.

Appendix 1 – Register Codes Key

These national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics through the School Census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

CODE	DESCRIPTION
Present Codes	
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site and taster days
L	Has arrived late, after the register has started, but before it has closed.
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from the School
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
Authorised Absences	
C	Exceptional circumstances
C1	In a regulated performance, undertaking regular employment abroad
C2	Absent due to a part-time timetable
D	Dual-registered
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	Job/school/college interview
M	Medical or dental appointment
Q	Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more are coded as C – if agreed)
S	Study leave
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	Non-compulsory school age child not required to attend
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend because of a whole-school closure
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to other unavoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure
Unauthorised Absence	
G	Holiday – not agreed
N	Reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Late after register has closed
Z	Pupil not yet on register
#	Planned whole school closure (holidays, INSET and polling station days)

