



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023

Reviewed Annually by Pupil Progress and Welfare Committee

Date of last Review	Signature
September 2023	Chair of Governors

Attendance Policy
Alford Primary School

MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to providing a full, enjoyable and effective education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from daily school attendance. To this end, the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff and governors.

AIMS:

It is recognised that

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

EXPECTATIONS:

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- That they attend school daily.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.

- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents:

- To ensure their children attend school daily and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their home learning.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- A quality education
- To receive a warning letter at least 2 days prior to an unauthorised holiday being taken. This will regard a fine being issued. Parents will be invited in to discuss this. (In line with L.A. guidance.)

TERM TIME “LEAVE OF ABSENCE”

In line with the DfE 2013 Attendance Regulations “head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.”

If a parent feels they have exceptional circumstances as a reason for absence they should complete the online form, found on our website. This will then be submitted to the Head Teacher for consideration. A letter will be sent to parents informing them of the Head Teacher’s decision regarding the request for absence. A meeting with the head teacher may follow. It is important to note that any requests should be made at least 14 days prior to the absence.

AUTHORISED OR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences.

- Illness – evidence may be requested
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term suspension
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks each term.
- Whole school and individual rewards for good attendance.
- A ‘Gold’ Award, using the Lincolnshire County Council’s Certificate, for 100% attendance achieved throughout the year. (Attendance is 100% if there has been no absence).
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the destination school.

- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS:

When a pupil does not attend or is persistently late, the school will respond effectively.

If a note or telephone call is not received from parents by 9:15am, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone.

The head teacher will be informed of any absence which:

- Is 90% or below (From September 2015 this will be the trigger for persistent absenteeism as opposed to 85%)
- Shows regular patterns e.g. repeated absence on the same day(s) of each week or random days every week
- Is unexplained (unauthorised)
- Home school visits may be undertaken if there is
 - no parental/carer contact regarding the absence or
 - a child has not been seen in school for a period of 4 days, a home visit will be completed on the 5th day of absence
 - if there are any additional safeguarding concerns (refer to safeguarding policy)

The head teacher will meet with the attendance officer on a regular basis and discuss issues such as the above which may be causing concern. Attendance letters will be sent to families when a child's attendance is hitting 90% or lower and Attendance Panel meetings may be held to discuss concerns. In extreme circumstances, where the school is very concerned about a child's attendance, we will try and persuade parents/ carers to engage in the TAC process. If there is no engagement, the school will request the service of an EWO (Educational Welfare Officer).

Where these measures are not effective a Governors Attendance Panel maybe requested.

LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the EWO. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

Other Agencies that may be used:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services
- Educational Psychologists
- Parent Support Adviser/ Early Help Workers

- Special Educational Needs Service
- Social Services
- Youth Service
- Local police

Holiday requests

In September 2013, the government released new legislation preventing Head Teachers from authorising term time holidays **other than in exceptional circumstances**.

We can no longer automatically accept letters from employers as a reason for approval, nor can we accept special offers, holidays as gifts or prizes as reasons to authorise the holiday.

We consider each request individually and cannot approve any leave retrospectively. If you wish to apply for a leave of absence, please complete a form which is available on our website or alternatively, use the link at the bottom of this page to download a leave of absence form.

If the school does not authorise a leave of absence and you take your child out of school, or keep your child off longer than was agreed, the absence will be unauthorised and the local authority may issue a penalty notice. The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Non-payment may result in the case being referred for prosecution through the magistrate's court.

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.