

 <b>Alfred Street Junior School</b>	Page 1 of 7
<b>Attendance Policy</b>	Issued: July 2020
	Review date: July 2021
<b>APPROVAL BY</b>	<b>FULL GOVERNING BODY</b>

# Attendance Policy

## Table of Contents

1. Aims.....	1
2. Information for Parents/Carers .....	2
3. Organisation.....	2
3.1. Points of Identification, Monitoring: .....	3
3.2. Children whose attendance is below 85%.....	3
3.3. Children who have 10% unauthorised absence: .....	3
3.4. Escalation Process: .....	4
4. School Procedures .....	4
5. Sickness .....	4
6. Exceptional Circumstances Leave .....	5
7. Religious Observance .....	5
8. Leaving School during the School Day .....	6
9. Children not collected after school hours .....	6
10. Responsibility .....	6
11. Monitoring, Evaluation and review.....	6
12. Useful Links .....	6
13. References.....	6
14. Safeguarding.....	7

## 1. Aims

**This document has been agreed between schools in the Rushden and Higham Cluster of schools. This policy has been produced to ensure a consistent approach towards attendance throughout the cluster.**

**Since agreement the policy has been updated by Alfred Street Junior School and Tennyson Road Infant in line with new NCC absence rules.**

Education provides a means of advancement for all young people to improve their life chances. Regular school attendance is a legal requirement for those registered at a school. Without it, the efforts of the best teachers and schools will come to nothing.

Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines that educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

## **2. Information for Parents/Carers**

Children of school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend school regularly. Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but because it is the best way of ensuring children make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. When a child is absent from school he or she misses the teaching provided on the days they are absent. When absent, they are also less prepared when they return for lessons going forward. There is a consequent risk of underachievement which head teachers and parents will both wish to avoid. There may be occasions when a child has to miss school – for example, if unwell. Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents should not take children out of school during term time in order to go on holiday

## **3. Organisation**

The class register is to be completed every morning and every afternoon. Registers open at **8.50am** and close at **9.00am**. Pupils arriving between **9.00am** and **9.20am** will be marked as late.

Any latecomers will be marked in the register appropriately:-

L - late **9.00am up until 9.20am** classed as present

U - **after 9.20am** classed as unauthorised absence

Continued lateness will be reported and discussed with the parents. **Adults must sign latecomers into the Late Book which is in the school office.**

Absences must be recorded by staff using the correct absences and attendance code as issued by the Department for Education.

All letters explaining absences are to be kept until the end of the school year and then filed with the registers. School originated telephone messages from parents may be disposed of at the end of each half term as the office has a duplicate record of them which will be archived.

Parents should report an absence either by telephone, in person or in written form via our Parentapps

Unauthorised third day absences must be reported by the staff to the Head Teacher and Family Support Worker immediately. Staff will use their knowledge of their pupil, known history and use their discretion in ascertaining whether action is needed in contacting the parents. As a first day response, the admin team will telephone parents.

A set of standard letters will be sent to parents where persistent lateness and/or absence are in evidence. Where school cannot make contact with parents then the Family Support Worker (FSW) will be contacted. Attendance below 96% for the previous term and annual figure will trigger action by school and targets **will** be set. If issues cannot be resolved then school will work with parents to establish an action plan. School will analyse lateness and attendance on termly basis.

If a pupil has more than 10% unauthorised absence and/or their overall attendance is less than 85%, then an interview is arranged between the Family Support Worker and the parent. If the child has not been in for 10 days and school have tried but have been unable to contact home, then the Educational Entitlement Team will be contacted.

If a child is on a Child Protection Plan any absences must be reported immediately and these will be investigated.

Authorised absences are those which are for a good reason such as illness or another unavoidable cause. Absences will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
- Attendance at examinations e.g. music.

The number of days permitted for an authorised absence will be determined by the Head Teacher on a case by case basis.

Unauthorised absences are those which our school does not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained or where no reason has been given
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Taking a holiday in term time.

### **3.1. Points of Identification, Monitoring:**

At the beginning of each term the school will identify, children whose attendance has fallen below 95% for the previous term **and** for the current year.

The registers will be analysed to find the reasons and patterns. An initial letter will be sent out to set a target of 95% for the next term.

Children who continue to have attendance below 95% but have improved receive a letter and are set a new target

Children who continue to have attendance below 95% and have not improved will be sent a letter requesting a meeting between the Head Teacher or FSW and Parent.

### **3.2. Children whose attendance is below 85%**

Letters will be sent to the Parents/Carers of these children to set targets if appropriate. If targets are not achieved, then a referral will be made to the Family Support Worker (FSW).

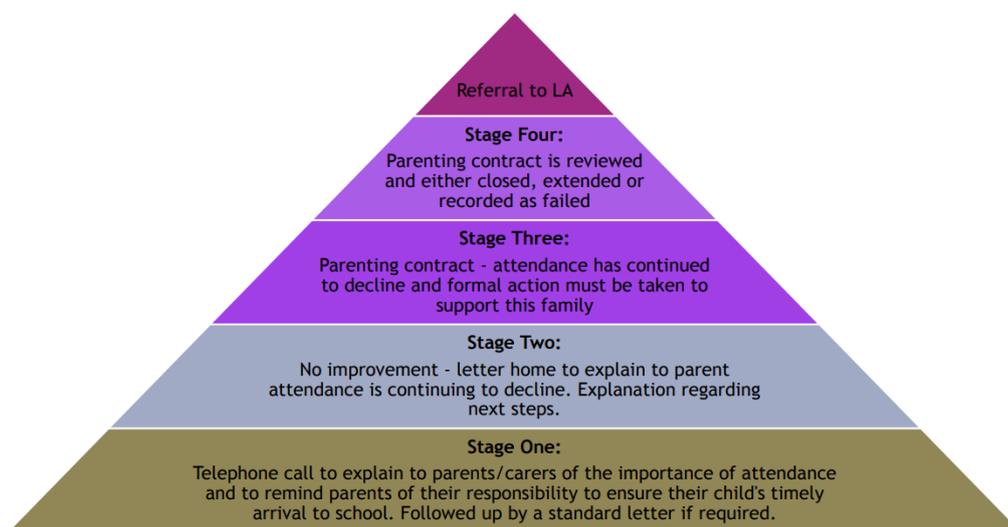
### **3.3. Children who have 10% unauthorised absence:**

The parents of these children will be sent letters setting targets for their children.

Children who have persistent absence will have a letter to explain that a referral will be made to the Educational Entitlement Service.

A process diagram is used to record what actions have been taken and this will act as an audit trail.

### 3.4. Escalation Process:



## 4. School Procedures

Our school operates a First Day Calling System. This means that parents should contact school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to inform us if their child is going to be absent from school. There is an automated voicemail service available.

**A phone call should be made each day the child is absent,** unless it is known in advance how long the child will be absent from school.

Reasons for a pupil's absence such as shopping, birthday treats and siblings' birthdays are not 'unavoidable causes' warranting authorised absence. Parents should avoid, where possible, making medical and dental appointments for their child during school time. Leave may however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

If we are unable to make contact with the primary contact we will contact the other numbers of the data sheet. In some instances we may choose to carry out a home visit as part of our safeguarding procedures. If contact hasn't been made at the end of the day a letter will be sent requesting a written response for the reason for absence

## 5. Sickness

If a child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting illness our school will request that they return to school 48 hours after the last period of vomiting or diarrhoea. This is taken from the 'Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and Other Child Care Settings Document' [1] from the Health Protection Agency:

Diarrhoea and vomiting illness	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting	48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting	

If a child is absent from school due to illness for 4 or more consecutive days, then confirmation of illness must be received from a Doctor/Medical Professional. If a child is off

due to a planned operation or hospitalisation then the letter must be seen by the school beforehand, or if this is not possible after discharge.

For Parents/Pupil that have attended a Surgery Meeting with the Family Support Worker, **medical confirmation is required.**

## **6. Exceptional Circumstances Leave**

From 1st September 2013, a new law [2] gave no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the **Head Teacher must be satisfied** that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Head Teachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the local authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

The Local Authority's decision to issue a fixed Penalty Notice is based on information submitted by the school.

Triggers for the fixed Notice Penalty will be:

- 18 sessions (9 days) of unauthorised absence in the last 6 weeks
- 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence
- An accumulation of unauthorised absence leading to an attendance of 85% or less.

***It's important that parents understand that the initial fixed penalty notice of £60 is issued to each parent for each child. A two-parent family with two children would be fined £240.***

Requests for leave must be given in writing to the Head Teacher and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the exceptional circumstance if necessary.

In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for exceptional circumstances only. The Rushden and Higham cluster of schools agree to follow the law, in such that the provision for the Head teacher to authorise absence purely for the purpose of a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances **could** include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside the above, the Head teacher must liaise with other schools where other siblings attend.

## **7. Religious Observance**

Absence due to religious observance will be authorised, but the day must be:

- exclusively be set apart for religious observance and
- set apart by the parents' religious body (not the parents).

## **8. Leaving School during the School Day**

No child will be allowed to leave the premises during school time unless collected by a parent or responsible adult. All departures must be entered into the signing out book in the School office. At special events school will organise individual class lists for parents to sign.

## **9. Children not collected after school hours**

There are rare occasions when perhaps due to an emergency, parents are not able to collect their children promptly from school, or make arrangements for their collection at the end of the school day.

At least two members of staff will remain in school with child who has not been collected  
In accordance with Northamptonshire County Council policy, if a child is not collected, the school will make enquiries to find the parents using the emergency contact numbers provided. If after one hour it has not been possible to contact parents/carers then the Head Teacher will contact the Police and/or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (Social Services) to inform them of a possible problem.

## **10. Responsibility**

The overall responsibility of monitoring pupils' attendance lies with the Head Teacher. The school is responsible for the collection of attendance data and producing appropriate responses.

## **11. Monitoring, Evaluation and review**

The Governing Body will review this policy annually and assess its implication and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout our school.

## **12. Useful Links**

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy [3]

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 [4]

Home School Agreement [5]

## **13. References**

[1] gov.uk, "Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings," [Online]. Available: [https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4336/sch\\_guidance\\_on\\_infection\\_control\\_in\\_schools\\_and\\_other\\_childcare\\_settings.pdf](https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4336/sch_guidance_on_infection_control_in_schools_and_other_childcare_settings.pdf). [Accessed 4 July 2020].

[2] gov.uk, "School attendance: guidance for schools," 29 May 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>. [Accessed 6 July 2020].

[3] Alfred Street Junior School, "Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy," 2020.

[4] gov.uk, "Keeping children safe in education," 2 April 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>. [Accessed 6 May 2020].

[5] Alfred Street Junior School, "Home School Agreement," 2020.

[6] GOV.UK, "Education Act 1996," 1996. [Online]. Available: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>. [Accessed 19 February 2020].

## **14. Safeguarding**

Our school recognises the importance that all children are entitled to full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Our staff monitor the attendance of all children and identify children whose attendance has fallen below 96% for the current year. Our school recognises a child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Our school will follow the details set out in the NSCB procedure 'Children Missing Education' to report and respond to incidences of children missing from school. We will also comply with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 [4]

Safeguarding our children is our priority – see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy [3]. All concerns must be reported to our Designated Safeguarding leads:

ASJS: Mrs K O'Connor, Mr C Butler, Mrs S Smith, Mrs W Watts, Mrs A Love