



Alsager Highfields

Community Primary School

Mighty oaks from small acorns grow

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Prepared by Richard Middlebrook, Acting Headteacher
March 2021

Presented for approval
to the Interim Board
of Alsager Highfields Primary School
on March 25th 2021

Chair of IEB Committee: Mr Peter Cox

Signature:

Date: March 25th 2021

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**Review Date: to be reviewed in the light of operating experience
and/or changes in legislation.**

SCOPE

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority. Please see further guidance on the Cheshire East website: http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools/parents/education_welfare_service/school_attendance.aspx

All children are sometimes unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at the earliest possible stage. **If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.** This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- keeping children off school without a good reason
- truancy from a whole session
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- taking holidays

Parents are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may issue parents with a letter that details the concerns or may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

What does the law say about attendance at school?

The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 it is the duty of the parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that they attend school regularly.

In line with the Department For Education guidance, all students who have attendance below 90% are defined as '**Persistent Absentees**'; this equates to 19 days of missed school per year. The school and potentially the 'Educational Welfare Service' will intervene with these students and contact with parents will be made. It is pertinent to point out that in an effort to address poor attendance and unauthorised absence the local authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty fine and/or prosecute parents under the Education Act 1996.

Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the Educational Welfare Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01270 375277 / 985943.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

PROCEDURES

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. These students are called “persistent absentees” by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Registers

Our school day has two sessions.

- Morning registration at 9.00am
- Afternoon registration at 1.00pm

Punctuality

All students should be at their classroom ready to learn at 9.00am. Students who arrive after 9am but before 9.45am will be recorded as late (L). After this time it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. All pupils who are late must report to the main office where an explanation and minutes late will be recorded. The Headteacher will determine whether the lateness is authorised.

Holidays

The regulations linked to holidays have been changed. In April 2012, the Government accepted Charlie Taylor’s recommendation to challenge the culture of the expectation term time holiday and set out a clear expectation that term time holiday leave should only be granted in ‘exceptional circumstances’.

If, despite the law, a parent wishes to request time off during term time please either complete a Request for Leave of Absence in Term Time which is available from the school office or complete and return the form below. It is essential that this is done well in advance of booking a holiday. With the achievement of our pupils of paramount importance and the regulations clear **we will be extremely unlikely to authorise any holiday leave.**

It is pertinent to point out that taking your child out of school without the school’s authorisation may result in the local authority issuing a Fixed Penalty fine to each parent/carer for each child, the penalty details are listed in the table below, and/or prosecute parents/carers under the Education Act 1996.

PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
TIMELINE	ONE CHILD	TWO CHILDREN
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	You will receive a summons to appear before the magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance

Notification of absence

Parents are required to phone or e-mail the school to notify the school of absence due to illness. Contact will need to be made for each day of absence unless an agreement has been made with the school.

Absence Line: 01270 882472 or admin@alsagerhighfields.cheshire.sch.uk

Leave may however, be granted in an emergency or for genuine pastoral reasons (e.g. after the death of close relative). It is important that parents provide a written note explaining the absence in advance and the school will determine whether the absence is to be authorised or not.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, the child's teacher or the school office should be informed in advance. A "present" mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. We always expect students to attend school before and after appointments.

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Whole School Target

Alsager Highfields School has high expectations for the attendance of our students and expects students to have attendance of 95% or above in line with Cheshire East's 'Green School' target. We are currently a 'Green School'.

All school reports include attendance information as well as authorised and unauthorised absences.

First Day Calling

The parents of absent students are contacted from 9.45am when no contact has been made to explain the absence of their child. For safeguarding reasons, it is important that we as a school address any absent students and contact parents about this.

Responsibilities

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Please work with us.

This policy will be made available on our web site.

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed in the light of operating experience and/or changes in legislation.

This Attendance Policy in respect of Alsager Highfields Primary School has been discussed and adopted by the Governing Body

Chair of Governors: Mr Peter Cox

Head Teacher: Mr Richard Middlebrook

Agreed at the meeting of the meeting of The Interim Board 25/3/21



ALSAGER HIGHFIELDS FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

The 2013 regulation amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. The Head teacher and the Governing Body will determine what the exceptional circumstances are.

FOR COMPLETION BY PARENT/CARER

You have requested the school's permission for leave of absence to be taken during term time. Before such authorisation is considered please complete the form below and return to the School Office. Completion of the form does not guarantee the leave of absence will be authorised.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class/Form: _____

Dates of Leave of Absence: From: _____ To: _____

Please give full reason(s) for asking for leave of absence in term time

Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer) Date: _____

It is important to have read and understood the school's policy on attendance

TAKING YOUR CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL WITHOUT THE SCHOOL'S AUTHORISATION MAY RESULT IN THE SCHOOL REQUESTING THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO ISSUE A FIXED PENALTY NOTICE TO EACH PARENT/CARER FOR EACH CHILD.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that the parents have failed to secure their child's regular attendance	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that the parents have failed to secure their children's regular attendance

For Completion by School:-

Authorised **REGISTER CODE H**
 Unauthorised **REGISTER CODE G**

Reason holiday declined

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Copy to: Parent
 Pupil File
 Local Authority