



# Altarnun Primary School

## Altarnun Primary Attendance Policy

September 2018

Review September 2019



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## 1. Introduction

Altarnun Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its children and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) at Altarnun Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our children are eager to learn, feel valued members of the School community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### 2.1. The Principal

The Principal will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with teaching staff. A report is prepared for the Trust half termly. The Principal will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that appropriate support is put in place for families and children.

### 2.2. Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Staff are responsible for the completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below):

## 3. Register Codes

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity



E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory School age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

The register will be called promptly at 8.55 am and 1.00pm in EYFS/KS1 and KS2

am session		pm session	
<b>Registration period</b>	<b>Register closes</b>	<b>Register periods</b>	<b>Register closes</b>
<b>8.55am- 9.00am</b>	<b>9.15am</b>	<b>1.00pm – 1.05pm</b>	<b>1.15pm</b>

Children who arrive after the registration period but before the register closes will be counted present but late. Any child who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent – unauthorised unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness.



## 4. Categorising Absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school's Principal.

Altarnun Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at school will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 5 days, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

### **Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –**

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- in exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see paragraph 10 for more details);
- where the school is satisfied that the child is medically unfit to attend. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. The school can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention.
- where the child has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);
- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the children's parent belongs;
- the child is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the child has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;



- in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the child is staying at home to mind the house;
- the child is shopping during school hours;
- the child is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the child is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the child has been stopped during a truancy sweep the parent is unable to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

## **5. Approved Educational Activity**

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance before entering the appropriate code in the register.

## **6. Class Registers**

Teachers will take a register at the beginning of every session to record absence and lateness. Any absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the school office and measures taken to locate the child.

## **7. Staff Training**

The Office Manager will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## **8. Collection and Analysis of Data**

The Principal will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to teachers parents, and the Trust. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by year group, registration group, and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, children with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance. The school will also monitor those students who fall in the Persistent Absence category (currently 10%).

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

The school will keep up to date data on the use of early intervention processes and the use of Penalty Notices.

## **9. Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance**



Attendance has a very high profile at Altarnun and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are aware of the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed prominently in the school.

Altarnun Primary school has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences.

### **9.1. First-day calling**

Altarnun Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a child is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. The phone call will be made by 9:30am by a member of the office staff. This helps to identify at an early stage, children who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a text message. If the child is absent the following day and contact still cannot be made with the family then principal will seek advice from the LA and if there are safeguarding or other concerns then the police will be called.

### **9.2. Academy Strategies to Tackle Absence**

The Principal is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that school intervenes in non-attendance at an early stage.

### **9.3. Procedures for Dealing with Absence**

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis. When a child's attendance drops below 95% a letter will be sent home to inform the parent and offer support where necessary. Parents will be invited into school to discuss if any support is required. If the attendance does not improve and goes below 92%, a further letter will be sent to parents advising them that any further absence will become unauthorised unless supported by evidence. If absences continue, the school will send out a further letter ensuring parents understand that the absences are no longer being authorised without the supporting evidence. Parents/Carers will also be informed about accumulated unauthorised absence in order to avoid further unauthorised absence and the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

### **9.4. Referral to the Local Authority**

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the child is failing to attend school at all), the above procedure will be followed and if there is no improvement a legal intervention will ensue. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 10 school days or more. Schools must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absences.

### **9.5. Lateness and Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive at the school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Some children are embarrassed when they arrive late which is not conducive for learning readiness. Children who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the child to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A child who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other student with an emerging pattern of absence.

Children who arrive late for school but before the register closes must enter through the main door and a reason for the late arrival noted. The school will monitor lates on a weekly basis and a letter will be sent offering support if necessary. If lateness continues the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss further.



For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Children arriving late should therefore report to the Main Office to sign in. It is important that all children arriving late follow this procedure.

For the same reason it is important that children leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day sign out/in at the Main Office. No child is allowed to leave the school without a parent or nominated responsible person.

## 10. Term-Time Holidays

Altarnun Primary will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off from school for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, well in advance of the intended holiday. Parents are advised not to make bookings unless the leave has been authorised by the Principal.

Altarnun Primary will consider authorising holidays for:

service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time and evidence is provided to this effect;

- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

Altarnun Primary will respond to requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

Altarnun Primary will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests i.e.: SATS examinations.

### 10.1. Extended leave of absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Altarnun Primary will take account of the following:

a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';

parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the Academy holiday periods for at least part of their trip);

the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved.

Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

### 10.2. Penalty Notices for pupil absence

Altarnun Primary will follow the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct when making a Penalty Notice referral.

Altarnun Primary's criteria for making a Penalty Notice referral are as follows:





- Has been identified for the first time as having 5 sessions or more (a session being a morning or afternoon) unauthorised absence in the current academic year.
- In the company of a parent, who has been stopped under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (during a truancy sweep) and the parent has failed to give a satisfactory explanation for the child's absence which the school has confirmed as unauthorised.
- Parents who meet the criteria will be issued with a Penalty Notice at the present time (March 2015) and as prescribed by the Department of Education this is £60 per child per parent with parental responsibility payable to the Local Authority, e.g. A family with two children and two parents could be charged £240.
- Parents will not receive more than one Penalty Notice in an academic year. Any subsequent unauthorised absences in the current academic year will be dealt with as non-attendance and the school's procedures as in para 2.4 will be followed.

## 11. Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by the school.

Altarnun Primary expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend school regularly;
  - support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
  - not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.
  - Parents will also be expected to:
    - notify the school on the first day of absence.
    - ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
    - work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
    - contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives.
- Altarnun Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## 12. Pupils' Responsibilities

All children should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance

Children should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Children also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

## 13. Trust Responsibilities

Section 175 (2)



The Trust shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

## 14. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend the school regularly
- regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy
- schools have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others
- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment, or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

## 15. Reviewing the Policy

The school will review this policy each year.



## Appendices



## Appendix 1 – A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### 1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The register will be called promptly at 8.55 am and 1pm

am session		pm session	
Registration period	Register closes	Register period	Register closes
8.55am- 9.00am	9.15am	1.00pm – 1.05pm	1.15pm

### 2. What happens if my child is late?

Should your child arrive late they need to go the Main Office and sign in giving the reason for their lateness.

### 3. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. If your child has an appointment during school time, we will need copies of appointment letters/slips.

### 4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (Please make routine appointments after school or during the Holidays)
- 1 Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Attending an interview for a job, college, university etc.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

### 5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

### 6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. A home visit may also be considered if no contact has been made.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

### 7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence or an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?



The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the school's main office as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SAT's (year 6 and Year 2). You need to complete an application form for absence from school and if the Principal then approves the visit, the school may set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

#### **8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

#### **9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.



## Appendix 2 – FLOWCHART





# Altarnun Primary School

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