

NAME OF POLICY:	Attendance Policy
STATUS:	Non-Statutory
DATE ISSUED:	October 2022
REVIEW DATE:	October 2024
APPROVED BY:	Trustees / AGB
APPROVED DATE:	October 2022

## 1. INTRODUCTION

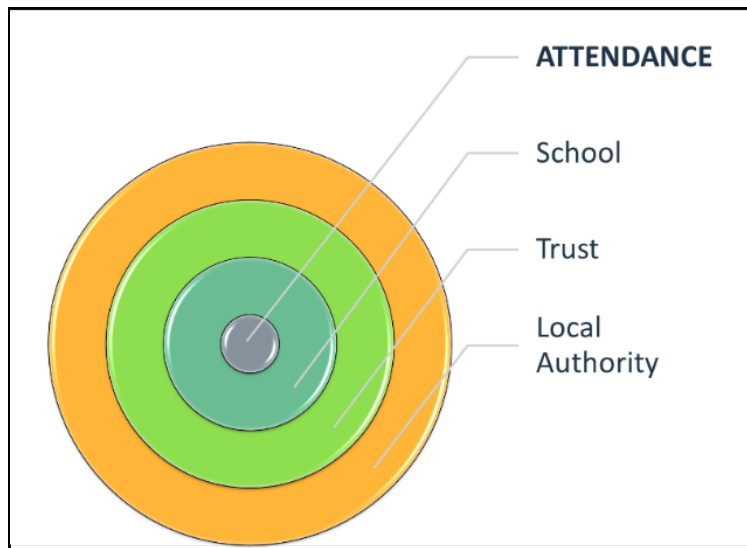
- 1.1 This attendance policy relates to Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery ('the School'), part of the Agora Learning Partnership ('the Trust'). All Agora schools follow the DfE (Department for Education) guidance and legislation in their application of the Attendance Policy which can be found at this [link](#).
- 1.2 The Agora Learning Partnership is committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling every child in the Trust schools to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. This is essential if children are to get the most out of their school experience, including in relation to their well-being, wider life chances and overall educational achievement. Research shows that children with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.
- 1.3 To encourage regular school attendance, every school in the Trust will:
- Offer high-quality provision that encourages regular school attendance
  - Develop a positive attendance culture
- 1.4 As this aspect of the Trust's work is so important, a senior leader responsible for attendance has been appointed in each of the Trust schools; the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery is Paul Sutton and Hazel Pinder.

## 2. AIMS

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are to ensure all schools in the Agora Learning Partnership:
- Take the steps needed to ensure children feel safe, valued and welcome
  - Achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality by creating a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance and helps children develop positive attitudes towards education where these do not exist
  - Actively promote positive behaviour and good attendance as these are central to enabling children to reach their full potential, including with regards to their educational outcomes
  - Consistently encourage and assist all children to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, thus reducing persistent absence, by helping children and their families to overcome barriers through individualised support

## 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Trust and School Leaders recognise that partnership working is essential, with different parties having a role to play if high levels of attendance and punctuality are to be achieved in all the Trust schools. As such, schools across the Trust are strongly encouraged to collaborate with the parties detailed in the diagram below, as well as children and their families, when working to improve attendance.

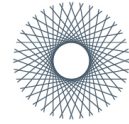
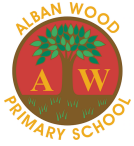


3.2 Such collaboration can assist with the approach to improving attendance detailed below; an evidence-based approach detailed in guidance from the Department for Education, that all schools across the Trust have adopted:

**Working together to improve attendance**

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

- EXPECT**  
Aspire to high standards of attendance 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**  
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 them before they become entrenched.
- LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**  
When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree 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 of 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 a parenting 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 or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.



*Working together to improve school attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities (Published May 2022/Applies from: September 2022 – page 8)*

### 3.3 The Board of Trustees

Trustees will:

- Set expectations through key performance indicators for attendance as part of overall educational standards
- Regularly monitor attendance rates
- Provide challenge, support or determine levels of intervention via the Chief Executive Officer/Academy Improvement Lead
- Review this policy every two years or earlier if deemed necessary

### 3.2 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Academy Improvement Lead (AIL)

The CEO/AIL will:

- Provide termly updates to Trustees on the Board's Standards and Curriculum Committee regarding attendance rates at each of the schools in the Trust and report on actions being taken to address any areas of poor attendance
- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently across the Trust
- Meet with each Headteacher to discuss attendance termly, offering appropriate challenge and support; ensuring that:
  - Rates of absence are monitored and where overall attendance falls below 96% the reasons are investigated and suitable improvement strategies put in place;
  - Each school has suitable processes for improving the attendance of any child whose absence is below 96%;
  - Each school has effective processes in place to reduce persistent absence where required
  - Each school has appropriate support in place to improve the attendance of vulnerable groups
- Arrange training, as required, to support Headteachers in the leadership and management of attendance

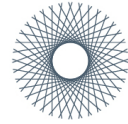
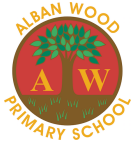
### 3.3 Academy Governing Board (AGB)

The Academy Governing Board has the responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy. It is the responsibility of the Academy Governing Board to monitor overall attendance, providing appropriate challenge and support, paying particular attention to the attendance of vulnerable groups.

### 3.4 Headteacher/Executive Headteacher

The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher, working with senior leaders and other staff, is responsible for:

- Implement the school Attendance Policy consistently, ensuring all staff, pupils and parents understand it



- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Providing a safe and welcoming learning environment
- Building strong relationships with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working with families to remove them
- Maintaining accurate records of attendance daily, according to legislation and guidance
- Deciding whether an absence should, or should not, be authorised
- Following up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring appropriate support is provided for children who have been excluded or who are absent for long periods because of ill-health
- Agreeing appropriate rewards for good attendance
- Ensuring staff are appropriately trained in managing good attendance and recording attendance according to government requirement
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify children or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place
- Reporting on attendance to the Academy Governing Board and the CEO
- Providing attendance details on a child's annual report
- Reporting details of poor attendance/punctuality to subsequent schools
- Working with external agencies and the local authority to tackle persistent absence

### 3.5 *Class teachers and other staff*

Teachers and other staff will ensure that:

- Children are registered accurately and efficiently using the correct codes
- Children's attendance and lateness is recorded twice daily
- Children receive praise and rewards for excellent attendance and punctuality
- Children returning from an absence are made to feel welcome and receive support to catch up on missed work or information provided to other children in their absence
- Parents are made aware immediately if there are any concerns about their child's attendance and/or punctuality
- Any concerns about the absence of an individual child or group of children are reported to the relevant Senior Leaders.

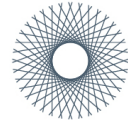
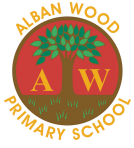
### 3.6 *Office/administrative staff*

3.6.1 Office and other administrative staff will record telephone calls/emails from parents about absence and alert class teachers regarding any particular concerns.

3.6.2 Administrative staff will also report any concerns about the absence of individual or groups of children that arise to the relevant Senior Leaders.

### 3.7 *Parents/carers*

3.7.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.



3.7.2 Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence (for exceptional circumstances) in advance from the school.

3.7.3 Absences from school affect the whole school community, not just the child concerned. Parents should understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year.

3.7.3 Parents/carers must:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- Provide up to date contact numbers/changes of address and details of at least two contacts for emergency use
- Inform the school promptly on the first day of their child's absence and give a reason for their child's absence (Main Office - 01923 678247 or email [admin@albanwood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@albanwood.herts.sch.uk))
- If their child is absent from school, maintain daily contact with the school, either by phone or by email, until their child returns to school (Main Office - 01923 678247 or email [admin@albanwood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@albanwood.herts.sch.uk))
- Seek permission for planned absences from school
- Understand that there is no automatic right to take their child on holiday during term time and it is highly unlikely that holiday in term time will be authorised. The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher will only approve holidays in term in exceptional circumstances.
- Provide medical evidence to (Main Office - 01923 678247 or email [admin@albanwood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@albanwood.herts.sch.uk)) indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency has arisen

3.7.4 Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact (Main Office - 01923 678247 or email [admin@albanwood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@albanwood.herts.sch.uk)) at an early stage and work with school staff to resolve any problems.

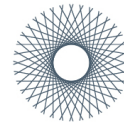
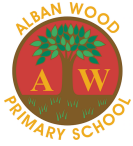
3.8 *Pupils*

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Be ready to learn

## 4. PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

4.1 Each school in the Agora Learning Partnership will:



- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and know that their presence is valued
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality with the children (in school) and parents, using newsletters and other communications; making attendance a high priority
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life
- Ensure that all children, regardless of their age, ability, gender, ethnicity, culture, special educational or physical needs, are given an equal opportunity to attend school regularly
- Make every effort to meet the individual needs of vulnerable children
- Celebrate good attendance by individual academy systems
- Encourage parents to fully support the Attendance Policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Promote the Attendance Policy with all new parents and provide information about the need for good attendance
- Establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance
- Share good practice with other schools in the Trust

4.2 In Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery we celebrate good attendance by:

- Class attendance in every newsletter.
- Weekly attendance certificates given out in assembly.
- Improved attendance emails for families where attendance was poor and through monitoring, has improved
- Posters around school outlining importance of good attendance and the impact that poor attendance can have on education

## 5. PUNCTUALITY

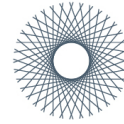
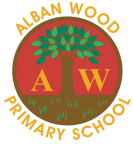
5.1 Good attendance also means being on time and not being late to school. Children who arrive late can feel embarrassed, left out and miss out on important introductions to lessons. Punctuality is an essential life skill that needs to be taught from the very beginning.

5.2 If a child is:

5 minutes late every day	<b>3 school days lost per year</b>
10 minutes late every day	<b>6.5 school days lost per year</b>
15 minutes late every day	<b>10 school days lost per year</b>
20 minutes late every day	<b>13 school days lost per year</b>
30 minutes late every day	<b>19 school days lost per year</b>

5.3 The starting and close of the day times for this school are outlined below:

Pupil group/key stage	Morning register time	Afternoon register time	Finish time
Nursery	9:00am	12:00pm	3:00pm
Reception	8:45am	12:45pm	3:15pm



KS1and KS2	8:50am	1:00pm	3:20pm
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## 6. DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 **Authorised Absence:** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carer writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- 6.2 Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences explained by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping or celebrate a birthday during school hours, and they inform the administrative team, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
- 6.3 **Unauthorised Absence:** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Academy and/or a parent/carer.
- 6.4 An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.
- 6.5 If needed, an authorised absence can be changed to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information about an absence is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers; an example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

## 6.6 Attendance rates

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks
90% equates to a day off every two weeks
85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks
80% equates to one whole day off every week

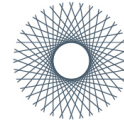
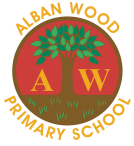
## 7 PROCESS

### 7.1 If a child is absent

The school will:

- Record notification of absence received by telephone or email
- If notification is not received, telephone parents/carers by 10 am on the first day of absence; the outcome of the call will be recorded
- Maintain regular contact with parents/carers throughout the child's absence
- Keep written notification from parents/carers on file
- Inform parents/carers in writing if a child's attendance falls below 90%
- Record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to the most recent guidance from the Department for Education

### 7.2 Lateness



- Registers are taken - any child arriving after this time will be recorded as late
- Afternoon sessions begin -when the register is taken again; children returning from home lunch after this time will be recorded as late
- Registers will close after 10 minutes; any pupil arriving after the registers have closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless the late arrival is deemed to have been caused by exceptional circumstances
- Parents/carers will be expected to sign into the Inventory System and give a reason for their child's lateness
- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality

### 7.3 Absence due to illness

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school and the school will always follow this up
- When contacting the school about their child's sickness absence, parents/carers must give specific reasons for absence – being 'ill' is not sufficient detail
- Unless parents/carers have been given a specific length of absence through illness by a doctor, they are expected to contact the school each day to provide an update; the details of related telephone calls are recorded and monitored
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence (for example, from a medical professional) stating that their child is too ill to attend school
- Absences are authorised by the Head of School/Executive Headteacher only; in most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register
- Registers are monitored on a regular basis by Hertfordshire County Council's Local Authority Attendance Officer to look at patterns of absence, identify individuals or groups absences, attendance of siblings, etc.; they may ask to see parents/carers if attendance requires improvement

### 7.4 Absence due to medical appointments

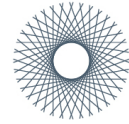
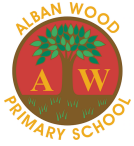
- The school requests that medical appointments, wherever possible, are made after school or in school holidays
- If a medical appointment is known in advance, parents must notify the school in writing
- If parents have needed to book an emergency medical appointment for their child, they are asked to inform the school by phoning/emailing before 8.40am
- Notification must be given to the school if a child needs to leave school during the day; the child must be signed and out of the school inventory system.

### 7.5 Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, including term-time holidays

In line with government regulations:

- Leave of absence during term time will not normally be granted
- Parents may make an application for leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance; Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery will decide what is deemed as an exceptional circumstance





- The Head of School/Executive Headteacher will decide whether this application will be granted
- The Head of School/Executive Headteacher will decide the number of days granted for any leave of absence
- Leave of absence taken without permission will be unauthorised
- A child can be removed from the school's register if they fail to return from a leave of absence where permission has been granted, if the following conditions apply:
  - The child has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted
  - There are no reasonable grounds to believe the child is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause
  - Both the school and the Local Authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts

### 6. Monitoring attendance

- Registration details are transferred to an electronic database, which is a legal document – these records are analysed regularly, resulting in the school following up persistent lateness, absences and pupils with low levels of attendance. Follow up actions include:
  - Monitoring meetings
  - Breach letters sent
  - Penalty notices can be issued
  - Meetings with parents
  - Termly meetings with the Attendance officer

### 7.7 Records

- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years
- The rate of attendance for every school is published online by the government as part of the school's performance data

### 7.8 Persistent absenteeism

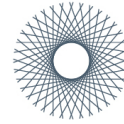
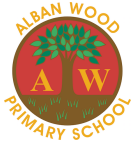
A child is classed as a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance is below 90%. Absence at this level damages a child's educational potential and, in such cases, the school will try to work with parents/carers to improve attendance rates quickly.

All persistent absentees are made known to the Local Authority Attendance Officer automatically.

### 7.9 Integrated working

Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery will work with other agencies and professionals to ensure children receive all the support available to achieve good attendance.

*Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO)*



- Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery works in partnership with the allocated LAAO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school
- The Head of School/Executive Headteacher and appropriate staff meet with the LAAO for regular meetings to discuss and review attendance
- Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery and the LAAO work with identified individual children and their parents to improve poor attendance
- When the attendance does not improve sufficiently and after discussion with the LAAO, the school may invite parents to a meeting to offer additional support, make a formal referral to the Local Authority or apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued

### 7.10 Exceptional circumstances

- The school will actively seek to work with parents/carers where there is a genuine difficulty with attendance
- Support strategies will be put in place for individual children where appropriate
- When a child is absent for more than five days due to exceptional circumstances, the school will do all it can to provide online work/support so that the child can keep up with their learning (if this is deemed to be appropriate)
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the home education support service so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school

### 7.11 Vulnerable children

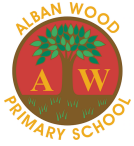
The attendance of children who are Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) is a high priority for schools.

If a vulnerable child is absent, external professionals (including a child's social worker) working with the child and/or their family will be notified of the absence.

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

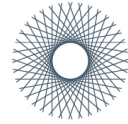
### 7.12 Fixed penalty notices

- **Penalty notices will involve a parent paying a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.**
- The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and guidance as determined by the Local Authority
- A penalty notice will be issued as a result of unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation; a pupil's absence must have been unauthorised for at least 15 sessions (7½ days, one session is half day either a m or pm) in the previous and/or current term
- Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply)
- Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444



# Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery

## Attendance Policy



AGORA  
LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP

We value: Respect, Kindness, Ambition

Work together, learn together, succeed together

- For more information on fixed penalty notices issued by Hertfordshire County Council, please see this [link](#):

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## 8 LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

8.1 This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection
- Behaviour
- Supporting children with medical conditions
- Accessibility plan