

Alexandra Primary School



Alexandra

Primary School

Aspire, Perform, Succeed

A Policy for Managing Whole School Attendance,
Punctuality and Absence.

Alexandra Primary School

Attendance Policy 2023

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Introduction

Alexandra Primary is a successful school and we value our children and their contribution to the school community. We aim to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to learn. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this. Alexandra Primary School is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School and our aim is to reflect, amongst others: articles 28, 29 and 31 as part of this policy. Articles can be found in Appendix 2

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parents legal responsibility. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders settle into Secondary school more easily
- Good attendance promotes desirable work attitudes for future employment
- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance

The School shall:

- Follow Daily Absence Protocol , see Appendix 3
- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as necessary
- Remind parents and children of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our letters, the school brochure, open evenings and pupil annual reports
- Strive to continually raise attendance and improve punctuality
- Publish our attendance and punctuality rates
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her / his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance and punctuality by letter and face to face meetings
- Follow the Attendance Intervention Steps outlined in Appendix 2
- If we continue to have concerns make a referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Service (SASS, formerly Education Welfare)
- Safeguard children by monitoring attendance patterns and reasons for absence.
- Provide access to on-line learning for those children who are advised to remain at home for a period of time due to medical circumstances.

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensuring your child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty/period of difficulty,
- Telephoning on the first morning of any absence, before 9:15am, to give us the reason and tell us when the child is likely to return to school
- Arranging all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Bringing your child to school before and returning them after a medical appointment.
- Sending us a note confirming the reason for your child's absence when they returns to school and providing medical proof where possible.
- Frequent absence claimed as illness must be supported by medical evidence. Keeping

us updated by telephone or letter if your child has any extended period of absence.

- Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, child minders and emergency contact details
- Notifying the school in writing of any planned absence in advance, with supporting documentation, on a request basis.
- Providing medical proof of sickness where absence is immediately before or after a school holiday.

Authorised Absence

These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, emergencies, or other unavoidable causes. For example: if a child is ill, immediate family bereavement, a recognised religious observance day. If a child suffers an immediate family bereavement the Head Teacher may authorise a maximum of 3 days leave to attend a funeral. This is one day to travel to the funeral, the funeral day and one day to travel back. Any additional leave would be unauthorised.

Where a child is to attend a grammar school test, the parent must provide the school with a copy of the invite letter, stating the time of the exam. Your child should attend school before or after the exam as only 1 (half day) session will be authorised.

If you have a medical / dental appointment which cannot be arranged outside of school hours, we will need to see a medical card / letter before the absence can be authorised. If an emergency appointment is made, please ask the surgery to give you a note with the date and time of the appointment. Where possible your child should be in school before and after the appointment.

We realise that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes a child to be absent. Parents need to let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence

Are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given and which are **not** permitted by law. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and / or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children
- Day trips and any leave in term time not agreed.
- Waiting for a delivery
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Term time holiday/Cheap flights
- Parent's or sibling's illness / appointments
- Going for a family day out
- A day off for Birthdays
- Preparation for grammar school tests.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is not good practice to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. Mr. Norton is the school Senior Attendance Champion. School support can also be given by Mrs. Aoudia or Mrs. Bird. Please contact the school office for support.

Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Support Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem.

Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year without good reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately and may be invited into school for a meeting. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the School Attendance Support Officer.(SASO). When absence fall below 80%, this is considered to be severe persistent absenteeism.

Punctuality

- It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest that day. It is also a time for children to settle to their learning by completing a start of the day activity such as a thinking skills or by reading or reviewing marking and feedback comments. These activities help the children so they are ready for learning immediately after registration.
- Morning registration is at 8:55am for the main school and 8:45am for Nursery. This is the time your child must be in the classroom. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate before this. As part of soft start, the classroom doors are open from 8:45am.
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- **We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.**
- If your child arrives after registration has closed (9.15am), then they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet the Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us anytime if you are having problems getting your child to school on time
- We bring the children in at 8.45am to Nursery and by 8.55am to the main school. Children are expected to come into school from 8:45 when the doors are opened.
- Children in EYS and KS1 must be dropped off and collected by a responsible person (age 16+ who has been authorised by the parent) to ensure their safety

- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance.
- We will let parents know if we have concerns about their child's punctuality.
- Parents must collect their children on time at the end of each school day. Children often become distressed if they are waiting for a parent.

Lateness

- All children arriving after 8.55am must be accompanied to the school office by the parent / carer, where they will be marked in.
- Children arriving after 9.15am will be marked as 'U' which will affect their overall attendance
- Lateness is monitored regularly. Where children have persistent lateness problems the SASO may be contacted.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in to the office on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us; please do not just tell the staff at the classroom door. The office needs to be informed with a phone call and also in writing. It would be appreciated if you could please phone before 9.15am.

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone/Text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.30am and follow our Daily Absence Protocols.
- Refer you to the school attendance officer.
- Refer the matter to the School Attendance Support Officer if attendance moves below 91% and does not improve despite interventions.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number or two – if we don't, then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Please make a note of the school telephone number: 0208 570 6826

School Attendance Support Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage for whatever reason and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance

Support Officer from the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the SASO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Holidays and Term Time Leave of Absence

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Head Teacher and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If parents take their child out of school during term time, they can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letter and should they choose to take further unauthorised leave they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority. If a child is absent for long periods, this may result in the child being removed from the school roll. Parents will have to re-apply for their place on return, with no guarantee of a place still being available.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not asking to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday during term time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement to time off during the school term to go on holiday.

It is our policy that:

- That a child's place in school is at risk if you take unauthorised term time leave. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term-time need to fill in an application at least 28 days before making any bookings.
- Parents must ask the school office for a form.
- No leave or time off for appointments will be granted for children in year 6 during SATs week.

Please remember that the more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom. All applications for leave must be made in advance and are granted in exceptional circumstances only, at the discretion of the Head Teacher. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application and the supporting evidence provided individually, including any previous patterns of leave in term time and the current attendance record.

School Outings / Visits / Residential Trips

Opportunities for children to attend these activities are provided. If they do not go, the children are expected in school, where alternative arrangements will be made for them.

It is important for all families to understand we will not agree leave in term time except in extreme circumstances.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed for emergencies only, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Parents will also need to check with the school office to ensure their child's place is still available. Detailed proof / information will also be required as to why the absence has continued.

For emergencies you must notify the school immediately before any absence is taken. If the emergency involves leaving the country, parents / carers must show all copies of original booking forms to the school office so copies can be forwarded to SASO at the Local Authority.

Absence immediately before or after a school holiday will be unauthorised unless medical proof has been received.

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance. Alexandra Primary School currently has an attendance target of 95% for the 2023 / 2024 academic year with a persistent absence target below between 12-15%. We are pleased that our attendance has continued above the national average and would wish to develop this to be consistently above 95.0% plus annually.

The target level of attendance for this school is 95.0% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares

Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the borough.

Procedures

- Registers of all classes are kept and monitored by staff daily
- SASO completing regular register checks and checks of school logs
- A note is made on the register of children who arrive late
- Log kept of all children daily for whom no notification for absence has been made and Daily Absence Protocols are followed
- Log kept of phone calls received from parents and reasons given.
- Copies of appointments and other relevant documents are kept as required for proof of absence
- Records are transferred to a child's new school on confirmation of their start date from the school.

If a child is absent for more than 20 school days they will be removed from the school roll. Parents will have to re-apply for their place on return, with no guarantee of a place still being available.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils. Nursery pupils will be removed from the school register if they take any unauthorised leave.

Children Missing Education

School will follow the Local Authority CME procedures which are saved on our admin drive. School does not remove children from the school role until we receive confirmation from a receiving school or the CME officer.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the year parents will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through newsletters.

The school employs strategies to encourage good attendance for example children will receive stickers/certificates and praise when their attendance is at 100% or close to it. Class non-uniform days and termly raffle draw to win a prize for excellent/improved attendance. Class cup/ attendance bear is awarded weekly and certificates are given out in assembly.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a statutory duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Teachers have regular conversations with parents about attendance. School reports also show levels of attendance.

Attendance will be monitored half termly and reported on termly to Governors through the headteachers report. School will look at trends over time and make comparisons for groups such as gender, SEND, PPG etc.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly with Governors and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Guidance on working together to improve school attendance (September 2023)
- Hounslow School Attendance Support Service Non Attendance and Term Time Leave Guidance (Sept 2018)
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance from the DfE (September 2023)

Appendix 1 Attendance Intervention Steps

Attendance Intervention

Step 1
Regular monitoring of attendance and daily attendance calls to parent / carer.

Step 2
If the child's attendance falls below 94% and absences are unauthorised a letter of concern is sent. Continue to monitor child's attendance.

Step 3
Review child's attendance, if attendance has failed to improve, invite parent / carer to an attendance meeting in school, where reasons for absence will be discussed.
Parent / carer will be asked to sign an attendance contract.

Step 4
Continue to monitor and where attendance does not improve, send TL1 letter which includes a 4 week target and advice regarding medical proof being required. Where medical proof is not provided absence will be unauthorised.

Step 5
Monitor attendance for 4 weeks

Step 6
If attendance does not improve and/or target is not met, a CFAN should then be completed and sent to Early Help Hounslow with supporting documents for SASS intervention.

Class teachers speak to parents about attendance at Parent meetings three times per year

Appendix 2 Rights Respecting

Article 1

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

Article 2

The Convention applies to everyone: whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 4

Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights.

Article 5

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to direct and guide their children as they grow up, so that they can enjoy their rights properly.

Article 6

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to make sure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 7

Every child has the right to a legal name and nationality, as well as the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

Article 8

Governments must respect every child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

Article 9

Children must not be separated from their parents unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

Article 10

Governments must act quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents want to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit both of them.

Article 11

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally or being prevented from returning.

Article 12

Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 13

Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 14

Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children information about this right.

Article 15

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life.

Article 17

Every child has the right to reliable information from the media. This should be information that children can understand.

Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

Article 18

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by giving them the help they need, especially if the child's parents work.

Article 19

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20

If a child cannot be looked after by their family, governments must make sure that they are looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture and language.

Article 21

If a child is adopted, the first concern must be what is best for the child. All children must be protected and kept safe, whether they are adopted in the country where they were born or in another country.

Article 22

If a child is a refugee or is seeking refuge, governments must make sure that they have the same rights as any other child. Governments must help in trying to reunite child refugees with their parents.

Article 23

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide support to disabled children.

Article 24

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must work to provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 25

If a child lives away from home (in care, hospital or in prison, for example), they have the right to a regular check of their treatment and the way they are cared for.

Article 26

Governments must provide extra money for the children of families in need.

Article 27

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical, social and mental needs. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 28

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 30

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

Article 31

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Article 32

Governments must protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or education.

Article 33

Governments must protect children from the use of illegal drugs.

Article 34

Governments must protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Article 35

Governments must ensure that children are not abducted or sold.

Article 36

Governments must protect children from all other forms of bad treatment.

Article 37

No child shall be tortured or suffer other cruel treatment or punishment. A child should be arrested or put in prison only as a last resort and then for the shortest possible time. Children must not be in a prison with adults. Children who are locked up must be able to keep in contact with their family.

Article 38

Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war. Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces.

Article 39

Children neglected, abused, exploited, tortured or who are victims of war must receive special help to help them recover their health, dignity and self-respect.

Article 40

A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to help from a lawyer and a fair trial that takes account of their age or situation. The child's privacy must be respected at all times.

Article 41

If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws must stay in place.

Article 42

Governments should make the Convention known to children and adults.

The Convention has 54 articles in total. Articles 43–54 are about how adults and governments work together to make sure that all children get all their rights.

Appendix 3 Daily Absence Protocol.

The process is as follows:

1. After registers are taken and absence calls are noted (by 10.30am latest),we produce the list of children absent with no explanation.
2. We double check in school before we start calling.
3. We call everyone on the contact list until we get an answer. We leave a message if there is a voicemail option.
4. **Once you make contact, school stops this 'Daily absence' process.**
5. We call the contact list at least twice.
6. We send an email or WhatsApp and a text to all contacts.

If no answer at all, from anyone on the contact list for the child we consider:-

- Does the child have additional agency support such as a social worker – if so, contact them.
- Do we have any school intelligence, does anyone know the family.
- We discuss with a DSL.
- We make a prompt home visit., if we can't get an answer we leave a note through the door asking the family to contact school urgently.
- On day 3 of no contact we refer to SASS/Children's services/MASH/Police – request a welfare check.
- We continue daily contact until we have received communication from the family.

These procedures are in line with our attendance policy.