Alexander Hosea Primary School

'Roots to grow, wings to fly'

Attendance and Truancy Policy – September 2026

Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)
This policy has been screened to ensure that we give 'due consideration' to equality of opportunity and has been agreed and formally approved by the appropriate reviewing and ratification Committee.

Author	Deb Williams & Heidi Brooks	**Date reviewed**	September 2026
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EIA approved by	FGB	**Reviewing committee**	FGB

EIA = due consideration of potential adverse impacts on the following groups: age; disability; gender and gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; racial groups; religion or belief; sexual orientation.

We strive to create an aspirational school community where its members are guided by our values: **Be Kind, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Unique, Be a Team Player, Be Curious, Be Resilient**. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed, so all staff show concern and care about each child's welfare.

The school will strive, through its values and aims and Personal, Social, Health and Emotional education, to prevent instances of lateness and absence before they occur.

We have adopted the following policy and procedures in consultation with staff and governors, taking into account changes in legislation relating to absence for holiday during term time.

Rationale
It is important for pupils to attend school regularly and punctually in order to take part fully in the life of the school and to take advantage of the learning opportunities and social experiences on offer and make good progress to prepare them for the next stages of their education. As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, Alexander Hosea Primary School places great emphasis upon this. Many mild illnesses such as coughs and colds can be managed (eg through taking appropriate medication), however, it is equally important that children should not be at school if they are very unwell (eg with a temperature or with an infectious disease such as chicken pox).

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school and to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Aims
- To improve attendance and punctuality across the whole school.
- To reduce the percentage of unauthorised absence and increase the percentage of complete weeks.
- To establish good habits and create a culture in which outstanding attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that excellent attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To ensure all children are supervised and safe.

- To provide clear and coherent information for parents about attendance and maintain and develop effective communication between home and school.
- To ensure the school has a consistent approach to attendance arrangements, procedures and routines and that all members of the school community are aware of their responsibilities for attendance and punctuality.

Roles and Responsibilities for School Attendance

The Education Act 1996 states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority (LA) to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities.

Attendance enforcement is usually carried out by the South Gloucestershire (LA) Education Welfare Service which provides an important link between schools and families. The Educational Welfare Officer meets termly with the Attendance Lead to discuss attendance issues, and offers advice and support.

The school is required to inform the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days where the absence has not been treated as authorised. The Headteacher can, of course, notify the LA earlier if there are areas of concern.

The law (Education Act of 1996) states that parents found guilty of school attendance offences could be subject to a penalty of up to £2500 and /or a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months, or alternatively the LA could recommend that a parenting order be enforced.

At Alexander Hosea Primary School, we encourage a good working relationship with parents by regularly publishing the arrangements for notifying absence and the school's policy towards absence on the school website, through newsletters and our 'Attending School' leaflet.

We expect the parents/carers to:
- Provide up to date contact numbers (for at least two named contacts) and changes of address.
- Notify the school before 9.00am when their child is unable to attend, with a valid reason, on the first day and every subsequent day of the absence.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school and is collected on time each day.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late and the reason for lateness.
- Engage with the Admin Team to sign their child in / out of the 'log book' when leaving school or returning their child to school during the school day.
- Share with the teacher any worries their child might have in school.
- Avoid making medical appointments during the school day.
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- Understand the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.

The Governing Body will:
- Set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance. The school's attendance target is currently 97%
- Agree and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

The Headteacher will:
- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Ensure all new parents are made aware of the Attendance Policy and procedures and encourage them to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil, group and whole school attendance patterns.
- Monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence, making judgements in conjunction with the office staff as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.

- Arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Refer unexplained absences, lateness and poor attendance which occur over a period of time (e.g. half a term), to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc) if attendance and /or punctuality is an issue.
- Report results of attendance monitoring and analysis to Governors to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs.
- Make use of benchmarking sources (eg through DfE) to evaluate attendance over time.

As appropriate, some of these responsibilities will be delegated to the Attendance Champion.

The Class Teachers will:
- Use Arbor IMS System to provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- Accurately record the reasons for absence.
- Respond promptly to any attendance issues and inform the Attendance Champion of concerns.
- Provide a safe, stimulating learning environment and enjoyable learning experiences to promote a commitment to learning among the children.
- Provide activities to support learning for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness (eg chicken pox), where appropriate. Homelearning is not provided during unauthorised family holidays.

Administrative Assistants will:
- Monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- Contact parents/carers on the first day and subsequent day of their child's absence to establish the reason if not already notified.
- Ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child.
- Make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Alert the Headteacher at the start of the day if a child with a social worker is absent from school.
- Print a fire drill report after morning and afternoon registration.

We expect pupils to:
- Have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality.
- Arrive at school and leave school on time.

Procedures

Registration
The school is required to maintain two registers:-
- An admission register (known as the school roll) containing a list of all pupils at the school;
- An electronic attendance register.

The school ensures that an attendance register for all pupils is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session (9.00am) and once at the start of the afternoon session (1.00pm). For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, the register must indicate whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school using the appropriate South Gloucestershire symbol. If the reason is unknown, an 'N' code will be entered until a reason has been established. It is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

Authorised / Unauthorised Absence
Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence (adhering to DfE Guidelines). All other absences will be treated as unauthorised.

Absences can only be authorised by the Headteacher, or by the Deputy Head in the absence of the Headteacher.

First Day Absence
Parents are expected to contact the school by 9am on the first day of absence. Where this does not happen, the school office staff will make telephone contact with the family to check the reason for absence. This information will be recorded on Arbor IMS Attendance Manager.

A list of children who walk to and from school alone (year 5 and year 6 only) is kept in the main office to promote pupil safety. The Headteacher reserves the right to decline an application for a child to walk to or from school on safety grounds.

Ten Days Absence
National threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-school week period. **Where the Penalty Notice of 10 sessions unauthorised national threshold is met** (prioritising the support first approach) – in each individual case, the school must consider if a Penalty Notice is appropriate, or support should be provided, or a Notice to Improve issued, or other legal interventions.

Frequent Absence
It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. If attendance falls below 94.9% action will be taken to find out whether there is an underlying cause and a plan put in place to help address this, if appropriate. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the family. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the school nurse if the problem appears to be medical. In other cases the school will discuss the problem with the school's Education Welfare Officer, who may attend an Attendance Plan Meeting with the Attendance Champion or other relevant staff.

Frequent Medical Absence
The school will discuss with the School Nurse those pupils who frequently miss days for medical reasons. Where necessary the GP may be asked for a medical note so the school can evaluate the child's health and educational needs.

Absence in term time, including holidays
The Department for Education (DfE) has made a significant amendment to the regulations governing requests for holiday related absences in term time. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Headteachers MAY NOT grant any holiday absence during term time. Other absences can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and must be requested in advance using the 'Request for Absence in Term Time' form, available from the school office.

The Headteacher will carefully review any request for leave of absence during term time but it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that this can even be considered or granted. Under the guidelines that accompany the Regulations, the Headteacher will determine what are exceptional circumstances and the number of school days a pupil can be away from school if the leave is granted, taking into account the individual circumstances on a case by case basis.

Penalty Notices
National penalty notice (see DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance July 2026) –
First fine, £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

National fine amount escalation for school absence penalty notices –
For a second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first.

National fine cap for school absence penalty notices
In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

Other Absence
Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made whether to authorise or not authorise the absence. Any absence, including illness, which takes attendance below 95% will not necessarily be authorised. Evidence of a valid reason or a doctor's appointment/note or other medical evidence may be requested by the school.

Attendance Monitoring and Evaluation
The school monitors the attendance of all pupils on a termly basis. Where the school has identified that a child's attendance has fallen below the level of 95% from the beginning of the academic year and / or s/he has had 4+ broken weeks in any term, irrespective of the reason, a personalised letter will be issued to the family with a detailed report of the absences and the reasons given for these. This will make them aware of the importance of consistent and regular attendance at school.

If there is no subsequent improvement in a child's attendance, a request will be made for a meeting with the parents and, where necessary, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss expectations and try to ensure that the child's attendance improves. Support and advice will be offered where necessary. If a child's attendance continues to cause concern a letter of referral will be sent to the Education Welfare Service and the parents may be called to attend a further meeting and Educational Welfare Support procedures may be implemented.

The school will endeavour to work with and support all children and families wherever possible.

The Attendance Champion and EWO will discuss annually, the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance. The Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors' FGB.

Lateness
The times of the school day are 9.00 a.m. - 12 noon; 1.00pm - 3.30 p.m.
Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day - 9am. Afternoon registration will take place at 1.00pm.

- Pupils arriving after 9.00am must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after 9.00am but before 9.30am (the closure of registration) will be recorded as late. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is provided, for example a medical appointment.
- If a pupil leaves during the school day then he/she and his/her parents/carers will report to the office and sign the child out.

Where children are regularly late, the class teacher will contact the parents concerned to have an informal discussion about this. If lateness persists, the Headteacher will be informed and will contact parents to inform them of the school's concerns and offering support to help rectify the situation and agree an action plan. If parents have not responded to support from the school then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer. Parents will be issued with a warning to effect an improvement before any Penalty Notice is issued.

A record is kept for both late arrivals and early departures in case of an emergency. This will include the time of arrival/departure, the reason for being late/leaving early and will be signed by the parent/carer.

Medical appointments
While we appreciate that some appointments e.g. hospital appointments, have to be taken when they are on offer, parents/carers are encouraged to make all others (doctors, dentists) out of school hours or in the school holidays.

REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS
All absences both authorised, unauthorised absence, lateness and broken weeks will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of each long term (3 times a year) in Parent data reports through INSIGHT.

Truancy
It is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant; if there is a concern that a child might be truanting, then action is taken immediately.

If truancy is suspected:

- The Headteacher is notified.
- The Headteacher contacts the parent by phone or pays a home visit and the Education Welfare Officer is informed.
- Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school.
- Reasons for the child not wanting to attend school are discussed with parents and the child to resolve any issues.

Conclusion
During the school year, we wish to encourage the highest possible individual attendance rate, so that all children attend school and access the full educational experience. We view this policy as central to achieving this. The whole school policy will be consistently implemented and other professionals will be consulted where appropriate.

Class teachers, the Attendance Champion, SENCO and the Headteacher are available to discuss any problems in relation to school attendance.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's rolling programme of policy review and revised as necessary in line with any changes in legislation.