



Albert Bradbeer Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Albert Bradbeer Primary strives to be a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and so all children 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 parents/carers make sure that children attend regularly and this Policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

The Law Relating to Attendance:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) To any special educational needs he/ she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning - 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 a child's regular attendance at school is a parents/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding - Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour management
- Health and safety
- Access to the curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

The Law relating to safeguarding:

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Parents are strongly advised to inform the school of any known leave to be taken, regardless of authorisation. If school is not aware of the reason for an extended absence then welfare concerns will become paramount, calls, home visits and even a referral to children's services may result.

Aims and objectives:

The aims and objectives of the school's policy on attendance and punctuality are to enable maximum pupil attendance by encouraging parents to encourage their children to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by regular and punctual attendance at school and:

- a) To establish and sustain improved levels of attendance above 96%.
- b) To accurately record levels of unauthorised absence to support the work of the Pastoral team.
- c) To ensure that policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are effective and applied consistently in practice.
- d) To ensure that registers are completed accurately, consistently and reliably and that analysis of attendance data is used to provide an effective monitoring system and to inform practice and target resources.
- e) To identify pupils and groups of pupils whose absence or lateness is giving cause for concern and target resources to work toward the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.
- f) To reduce the percentage of persistent absentees (attendance below 90%).
- g) To promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where each member of the school community, including staff, governors, parents and pupils is aware of their roles and responsibilities and makes an effective contribution.
- h) To establish working partnerships with parents, other support agencies and the wider community to address attendance issues.

Expectations of the School:

- Rewarding good attendance by class rewards, the newsletter and individual termly certificates.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance; registers will be completed at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions.
- Early and sensitive contact with parents on occasions when a pupil is absent and where no appropriate reason for absence has been provided. 'Text' may be used for this.
- Early and sensitive action to be taken to resolve any problems/issues of which the school is notified.
- Excellent and improved levels of attendance and relevant pupils will be rewarded by termly attendance certificates and weekly class attendance awards. Attendance rates will form an integral part of celebrations in school.
- Positive staff attitudes to pupils returning following absence will be promoted.
- Regular evaluation of attendance procedures and levels of attendance by Senior Leadership Team and the school's Governing Body.

- All members of the school community will be consulted in monitoring and reviewing this attendance policy.
- If a child is taken ill during the school day, the parent will be notified and should then arrange to collect the child from reception.

Expectations of Parents:

- To actively encourage their children to attend school on a regular basis.
- To contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend school, on the first day of absence by 9.30 a.m. and confirm that initial contact in writing when the child returns to school.
- To ensure that children arrive at school in good time for registration, dressed appropriately, with appropriate equipment and well prepared for the school day.
- To positively engage with the school and inform an appropriate member of staff of any issue/problem which may hinder their child's regular attendance at school, including discipline and behaviour in school.
- Ensure that, unless absolutely necessary, any medical or dental appointments in respect of their child are made outside school hours, but where such school-time appointments are made that evidence is provided to school staff. Parents should ensure that wherever possible, pupils return to school following such medical appointments.
- Parents are expected to co-operate with school staff and respond to calls and correspondence from the Family Support Worker or Administrative staff.

Expectations of Pupils:

- That they will attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time for registration periods and lessons and be appropriately dressed and otherwise prepared for the school day.
- That they will inform a member of staff of any difficulty that may hinder their attendance at school.
- That their behaviour is such that it does not conflict with the day to day running of the school.
- That they will remain in school throughout the school day.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The School will operate a whole school policy for the management of attendance and in order that school procedures are efficiently and effectively implemented, the following members of staff will undertake the following responsibilities:

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher shall have overall responsibility for attendance at Albert Bradbeer Primary Academy and be the attendance lead for attendance at the school, responsible for the day to day issues surrounding attendance and keeping the Governing Body informed of any key issues. The Head Teacher will liaise with the Family Support Worker and also with class teachers regarding priority students in their class.

Class Teachers

Teachers are responsible for marking the attendance registers in accordance with the registration system and guidelines employed by the school and also for bringing to the attention of the Family Support Worker any pupil that exhibits irregular attendance at school and/or is absent for more than three consecutive days with no reason provided. They also should pursue parents for reasons for non-attendance within ten days of the absence.

First day contact by Family Support Worker / Admin Officers

First day contact is provided by the Family Support Worker or the Admin Officers. If no contact is received from parents/carers, we will make initial contact with parents and if a parent is unobtainable, we will generate a text message requesting information. All staff have a responsibility to inform the Head Teacher of any issues relating to school attendance and punctuality in respect of any pupil of whom they are aware or with whom they are working with. If recording a reason for absence; date, time of call, who they are speaking to and the reason for absence will be recorded on SIMS.

Family Support Worker

The Family Support Worker shall keep the Head Teacher informed of the action taken for children whose attendance drops below 90%. The Family Support Worker will monitor attendance on a weekly basis and address concerns regarding any child who is developing a poor pattern of attendance. The Family Support Worker will provide support to children and their families and through assessment of their needs, help in engaging an inter-agency and multi-agency response to addressing those needs where required. The needs of the family will be ascertained through telephone conversations and meetings in school and this will stem from the evidence gained from the attendance records.

School Governors should:

- Monitor attendance levels, policy and procedures at the school.
- Place a standing item within the Head's Report at termly meetings of the Governing Body to continually review attendance. This policy will be reviewed on a biannual basis and governors will play an active part in the whole school community.
- Governors, in conjunction with the Head Teacher will help set realistic but challenging targets for improvements in school attendance.

Understanding Types of Absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes agreed by the school.

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

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed.
- Absence from individual lessons – should a child be present for registration but then fail to attend subsequent lessons (without permission) school reserve the right to amend the register code for that school session to unauthorised to reflect lesson absence. In the event of this happening parents would be notified by telephone or a letter by 1st class post on the same school day.

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 never better 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 make things worse.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE DESCRIPTION MEANING

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity
C	Other Authorized Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Educational Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments)	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Educational 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 Educational 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 Educational Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	
Z	Pupils not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year from September 2016 for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence 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 parents will be informed of this immediately.

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact school as soon as possible (by 9.30 a.m.) on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day children return with an explanation of the absence if they have not already telephoned us and had the reason for absence recorded on the register.
- Or, parents can call into school and report to reception. A member of staff will speak with you if available and a discussion is needed.

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with our Family Support Worker and/or a member of the senior management team if absences persist.
- Begin the Spotlight Process if absence continues to occur. **See Appendix A.**

Tracking Absence:

- Absence reports are produced on a daily basis for the first day contact person to telephone the home or a mobile if a message had not been received. If no contact can be made, the school will "text" the parent/carer that day.
- If an acceptable reason for absence is given and accepted by the school the absence may be marked as "authorised". The school are under no obligation to accept the reason given for absence when there is doubt as to its validity.
- The Head Teacher will keep under review all pupils whose attendance falls below 90% and keep under consideration reasons given for the absence. This will be reviewed along with the Family Support Worker who will advise as to whether the school should consider no longer authorising absence.
- If any child's attendance at the school falls below 90% and the absence is unauthorised, the Family Support Worker will intervene.
- Where a child is identified as post registration truancy and has no valid reason for leaving the school grounds he/she should be marked as unauthorised absence.
- The following three groups will be used for tracking on a termly basis:
Below 90%– persistent absentees, 90-92.9% - cause for concern 93-94% - below average attendance.

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. So please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed or your child's health and safety may be compromised. This could result in Safeguarding or Child Protection issue.

Family Support Worker:

Parents are expected to contact school before 9.30 a.m. and to work with the staff in resolving any issues or concerns they have in getting their child(ren) to school on time. This is nearly always successful. The Family Support Worker 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, the Spotlight process will begin and a referral may be made to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service. Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to speak with the Family Support Worker to address any issues or concerns they have. Please visit the link below for further information. www.abprimary.bham.sch.uk/familysupport

Registration:

- Teaching staff are required to mark the registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. This is a legal requirement.
- Individual members of staff are responsible for the security of the register/electronic folders used to mark the registers. Supply staff should be aided to do this and may be asked to manually register for the Family Support Worker or Administrative staff to transfer to SIMS.
- The register is a legal document in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Any removal of a child from the register must comply with Regulation 8.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils are sometimes unsettled, may disrupt lessons and can be embarrassed about their lateness, which could then lead to future absence.

How we Manage Lateness:

The school day starts at **8.50 a.m.** and we expect children to be in class at that time. Children who are not in class by that time will need to register at the office and will receive a late mark, with the minutes late recorded. The afternoon session starts at **12.45 p.m.** in KS1 and **1.30 p.m.** in KS2. At **9.30 am** the registers will be closed. In the afternoon this is **1.30 p.m.** In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a 'U' mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Family Support Worker, but parents can approach school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Every week the Family Support Worker will run a lateness report and if necessary a letter will be sent out and a meeting will be arranged if lateness continues to be an issue.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and the law now discourages parents from taking children away in school time.

Parents should remember that any savings they think they may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

There is **no** entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government have amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as of September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

- (a) An application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
- (b) The proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

Therefore, Albert Bradbeer Primary Academy can only grant leave where parents can prove exceptional circumstances.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrate’s Court. If the school is aware of unauthorised holidays a ‘G’ code will be entered. If the reason for absence is unknown then a ‘O’ code will be entered as for other unauthorised absences.

Leave in Exceptional Circumstances:

Exceptional circumstances does not include normal family holidays. At Albert Bradbeer Primary Academy any leave agreed is likely to be short and is entirely at the schools’ discretion. **Events that may be considered are for example;**

- A close family funeral (though this may not be suitable for younger children) – one day normally granted.
- The marriage or re-marriage ceremony (not honeymoon) of a parent or older sibling only – normally one to two days, up to one week if ceremony is abroad.
- Graduation of a parent or older sibling only – one day normally granted.
- Religious observance for major festivals, such as Eid, for one or two days.

Events that would not be considered as sufficient exceptional circumstances to authorise leave include but are not exhaustively;

- Birthdays, anniversaries or associated celebrations for a child or family member. Celebrations can take place at a weekend.
- Holidays plans resulting from restricted parental leave entitlement, separated family arrangements, transport issues/flight restrictions.
- Domestic and childcare issues (e.g. installation work, deliveries, car failures, illness or appointments of family members).

Managing Illness during the school day:

- If a pupil is unwell or has an accident and is considered unfit to continue in lessons they should report to the main office for their condition to be assessed. If necessary parents will be informed for the pupil to be collected from reception.
- Pupils are not allowed to make their own way home, but must be collected by an appropriate adult.
- Parents will still be required to inform the school with regards to their child’s absence where the absence goes beyond the session in which they were sent home.

- In exceptional circumstances emergency services may be contacted if there is any delay in the parents arrival at school or in the interests of the welfare of the child and parents will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.
- If parents can prove medical appointments have been attended and the child returns during the session then an 'L' code and a note in the register can be used, rather than an authorised absence.

Education off the School Site:

- On occasions pupils may be involved in educational activities off the school site, such as sport, residential, field trips etc. If students fail to attend education off site it is still deemed as school attendance and the register will reflect whether any absence is authorised or not. The circumstances of this may be referred to the Family Support Worker where appropriate.

Rewards and Incentives:

- The school recognises the need to reward school attendance and a number of strategies are employed to achieve this to reflect:

a) Weekly Attendance

b) Termly Attendance

c) Annual Attendance

d) Punctuality

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

Albert Bradbeer Primary Academy has targets to improve attendance and each child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The average level of attendance for this school is **96%** and we will keep parents updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. We know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Birmingham.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask parents/carers for their full support. Updates will also be provided through the school website.

Penalty Fines:

Leave of absence – Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 a Head Teacher **MAY NOT** authorise a leave of absence in term time for a holiday. A Head Teacher **MAY** (at his or her own discretion) authorise absence for exceptional circumstances. An application for a leave of absence must be made in writing to the school.

If you take a leave of absence which **is not authorised** by the school **you may be issued with a fixed penalty fine** via the Education Welfare Service. A penalty fine can also be issued for:

- Unauthorised absence from school
- Being identified out of school on a truancy sweep

Exclusion:

If your child is excluded from school and during the first six days of exclusion, and he or she is identified in a public place **you may be issued with a fixed penalty fine** via the Education Welfare Service.

Parenting orders:

Parenting orders may be issued by magistrates following the conviction of parents or carers or on the application of the local authority for failing to send their child to school regularly. As part of the parenting order, you will be required to:

- Fulfil certain tasks such as taking your child to school each day
- Attend parenting guidance sessions

If you fail to do this, you will be in breach of a court order. This matter will return to court and further fines could be imposed.

Prosecution:

If you fail to meet all of the above, you may be prosecuted. This could result in each parent or carer receiving a fine of up to £2,500 and / or three months imprisonment for failing to ensure your child regularly attends school

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a 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 and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Written by: Richard Phillips
Reviewed in: Summer Term 2017
Further Review in: Summer Term 2019

Appendix A

Spotlight on Attendance

A very important message for all parents

Albert Bradbeer Primary Academy are working in partnership with parents to improve school attendance. **We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration. Leave in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Legal action that may be taken include:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern you will receive another letter advising you about improving attendance. After this, any further unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

We will improve attendance by making it clear within the school and local community that unauthorised absence is not acceptable. You will be informed of the number of penalty notices issued, prosecutions and the level of fines.

Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.