



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2025-26

Policy Review

This document will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

This document was formally approved by the Governing Body on 10th December 2025

Date of Review: December 2026

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1. Introduction

Children's learning is at the heart of everything we do at Alumwell Junior School. Children however cannot learn if they are absent from school. In order to achieve the best outcomes for children it is expected that all our children will attend school every day on time. We believe that excellent attendance is paramount to raising standards and is fundamental to whole school improvement.

This policy is therefore designed to give clear information in respect of our attendance management processes to parents, children, school staff, governors and the wider community.

This policy sets out our ambition for our children and recognises that there is a strong correlation between any absence and underachievement. It also recognises that good punctuality is essential for a child to start the school day prepared for learning.

We will focus on reducing persistent absence, unauthorised absence and we will challenge unsatisfactory reasons given for all absences.

2. The Aims of this Policy

- Improve overall attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for pupils, parents, staff and governors
- To define agreed roles and responsibilities in carrying out specific tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance to families
- To promote multi-agency partnerships to address the needs of children with complexities related to irregular attendance

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy adheres to the relevant guidance as set out in:

[Gov.UK: Working together to improve school attendance](#)

[Gov.UK: Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#)

[Gov.UK: Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. Parents

Parents have a responsibility to:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school every day and any emerging issues should be advised to the school at the earliest opportunity. (At Alumwell Junior School we consider regular attendance to be at least 96%).
- Notify the school on the first day of any absence to explain the reason for the absence. Parents should understand that in law, it is the school who decides whether the absence is going to be

authorised or not. Schools will base this judgement on the reason provided for the absence and/or the level of absence.

- Only to request leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances, and to make such requests in advance.
- Ensure that their child/children arrive at school on time.
- Work in partnership with school to address any issues which prevent regular attendance.
- Parents of pupils who are persistently absent (below 90% attendance) may be asked to provide medical evidence during periods of absence.

4.2 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. The Governors also hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

4.3 The Headteacher

The Headteacher:

- Will ensure that all staff have the appropriate training to ensure that attendance is a priority at school.
- Will report data on a termly basis to governors.
- Will support staff when monitoring the attendance of pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (PA).

4.4 The Attendance Lead

The School Attendance Lead:

- Will rigorously track attendance data at an individual pupil level and also that of groups, working with the Education Welfare Officer and Local Authority to tackle persistent absence (PA).
- Will schedule meetings with Parents to discuss barriers to regular attendance moving forward.
- Will liaise with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) on a weekly basis to discuss pupils who are identified on the attendance caseload and are at risk of being persistently absent.
- Will attend Targeting Support Meetings at least once per term, using the school's attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions.
- Will compile absence reports from the Education Management System (SIMS), reporting on groups and tracking overall trends.
- Will liaise with the SLT to agree letter templates, to ensure that parents are aware of their child's attendance.

4.5 Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO):

- Will work within a commissioned time framework and will support the school in managing attendance. The EWO will normally visit once a week for a referral meeting with the Attendance Lead.
- Will carry out unannounced home visits to families who have recent absence and are persistently absent.
- Will support the school to identify children who are persistently absent or at risk of becoming persistently absent each term and will actively target those children for early intervention.
- Will assist with all prosecutions and fixed penalty notices for irregular attendance.
- Will advise the school on the protocol surrounding fixed penalty notices, warning letters and the route to legal action

4.6 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance in the school register on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting to the school office.

4.7 The Family Support Worker

The Family Support Worker (FSW):

- Will work with the Attendance Lead to support parents in helping to ensure pupils attend school regularly. They will make the appropriate referral to outside agencies and signpost to further support should the need be present.
- Will carry out unannounced home visits to families on the first day of absence or if there are serious concerns about attendance.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

School maintains an attendance register, which contains all pupils. Each session, every pupil is marked as one of the following:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Please refer to Appendix 1 for all DfE attendance codes. Every entry on the attendance register will be kept for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school gates open at 8:40am, when pupils can come in to their classroom. ***The school day starts at 8:50am.*** The afternoon session starts at 1:25pm and the end of the day is at 3:15pm.

5.2 Unplanned absence procedure

On the first day that a child is absent from school Parents must contact school to report their child absent, either by using the Reach More Parents app or by calling the school main telephone number and selecting Option 1. When leaving a message Parents should give the name of their child, their class name and the reason for their child's absence.

This information will be recorded on Alumwell Junior School register.

On the first day of absence if a parent has not contacted school, a member of the office staff will contact the parent by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence. Where contact cannot be made then either the Family Support Worker or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will attempt to make contact via telephone or a home visit.

Parents must submit an absence report by Reach More Parents by Weduc or call school to leave a message on the absence line for each day that a child is absent.

5.3 Absence due to sickness

It is the decision of the Headteacher to accept a reason for a child's absence or whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' explanation that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested. This may be if a child has persistent absence. (below 90% attendance). School will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily, however when a pupil become persistently absent it is important to establish the reason for the absence.

5.4 Planned absence

Parents should arrange all routine medical appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will usually be authorised as long as the pupil's parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. In all cases the appropriate confirmation must be submitted to the school office, for example, an appointment card, letter or confirmation text message, where it is kept on the pupil's record.

5.5 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

Where punctuality is a concern, the Family Support Worker or Attendance Lead will contact parents to ascertain if further support is needed to help improve punctuality.

Please contact school if your child is going to be late, or come in with them and inform the office of their arrival.

5.6 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.
- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer to ascertain the reason, by calling the parent, by writing a letter to the parent(s), or by carrying out a home visit.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

a. Term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind each request.

Examples of valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical appointments, which cannot be scheduled for a time out of the school day.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

b. Unauthorised term time absence

All other absences must be treated as unauthorised and given the appropriate code. Examples of unauthorised absences could be:

- Family birthday
- Holidays not agreed
- Shopping
- Emerging patterns of any absence until satisfactory reason has been sought
- Illness of another family member
- Trips to airports
- Non urgent appointments dental or optician etc.

7. First day absence

Parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide reasons and a return date. The information will be then recorded on our database. Where no contact is made the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We may conduct a home visit if we feel that we need to.

8. More than five days absence

If a child has been absent for 5 days and no contact has been made with the family, the EWO will make a visit to the child's home. While the child is absent the school will continue attempting to make contact with the family. This will be by email, telephone or in person. After 20 school days have elapsed and no contact

has been made, the school will consider taking action in line with the agreed Local Authority guidance. In some cases, a "Safe and Well" check will be requested from West Midlands Police.

9. Frequent Absence (at risk of becoming persistently absent)

In cases where a pupil's attendance falls below 92% the Attendance Lead will write to parents to discuss issues affecting the child's attendance and offer support to help improve attendance.

The Attendance Lead will identify pupils who are 'at risk' of becoming persistently absent each week. Once a pupil reaches below 92%, school will seek ways to ensure that attendance does not fall further. This may be by offering Early Help to the family, carrying out a School Nurses Referral, or by offering other methods of support which will reduce the risk of them becoming persistently absent. The Attendance Lead will usually, in the first instance, make an informal call to the Parent or Carer to discuss the drop in attendance and ascertain the reasons for this before progressing the matter any further.

10. Absence or Holiday during term time

Parents should complete an Absence Request Form, or apply in writing to the Headteacher. In all cases a return date must always be given. Due to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the school is **unable** to authorise time off during school term time. In these cases, the register will be marked with the G code (unauthorised holiday).

The parent will receive a written response to their request for leave, which is usually sent by email. This letter will let the parent know if the absence has been authorised or not. Where the parents continue to take their child/ren out on unauthorised absence, the school will refer the absence to the Education Welfare Service (SAST), where a fixed penalty notice of £60 per child per adult will be issued. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the Headteacher approve absence during term time.

If the parent takes their child out on leave during term time for more than ten days, the LA Pupil Tracking Team will be informed and this means that the child may lose their place at Alumwell Junior School.

If your child does lose their place at Alumwell Junior School, you will have to reapply at <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-in-walsall/school-admissions>

11. Absences in Exceptional Circumstances

Following Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, parents can only remove their children during term time for **exceptional circumstances**. If parents feel they can demonstrate exceptional circumstances they should make an application to the Headteacher outlining the circumstances, giving a return date. The Headteacher will determine if the absence can be authorised based on the evidence provided and the number of school days the child will be away from school if the leave is granted. Where the leave is granted, the register will be marked with the H code (authorised holiday). Where no or inadequate evidence is provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the register marked with the G code.

12. Information for Parents

All parents will have access to the following information:

- The Attendance Policy (school website)

- Updates of their child's attendance (Reach More Parents by Weduc)

13. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors the attendance and punctuality of all pupils on a daily basis as part of school safeguarding procedures. On the first day of absence, where the parent has failed to make contact, the Attendance Lead will contact with parents either by email or phone call. A visit may be requested to the child's home by either the Family Support Worker or by the LA Education Welfare Officer.

Where a child's attendance has fallen below 92% the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (SAST) to take further action.

14. Supporting when a child has irregular attendance

The school aims to support wherever possible when there are barriers to regular attendance. If poor attendance continues, then we aim to help improve the attendance by removing the barriers. We will also send:

- Attendance Concern Letters.
- Parent Meeting Letters (which may also be issued by Local Authority Attendance Officer).
- Punctuality Letters.
- EWO intervention, telephone calls, home visits and parent meetings.
- EWO warning letter, notification of legal Intervention.
- EWO monitoring for a 4-week period.

15. Legal sanctions

The School or Local Authority can issue a fixed penalty notice to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

16. Monitoring arrangements

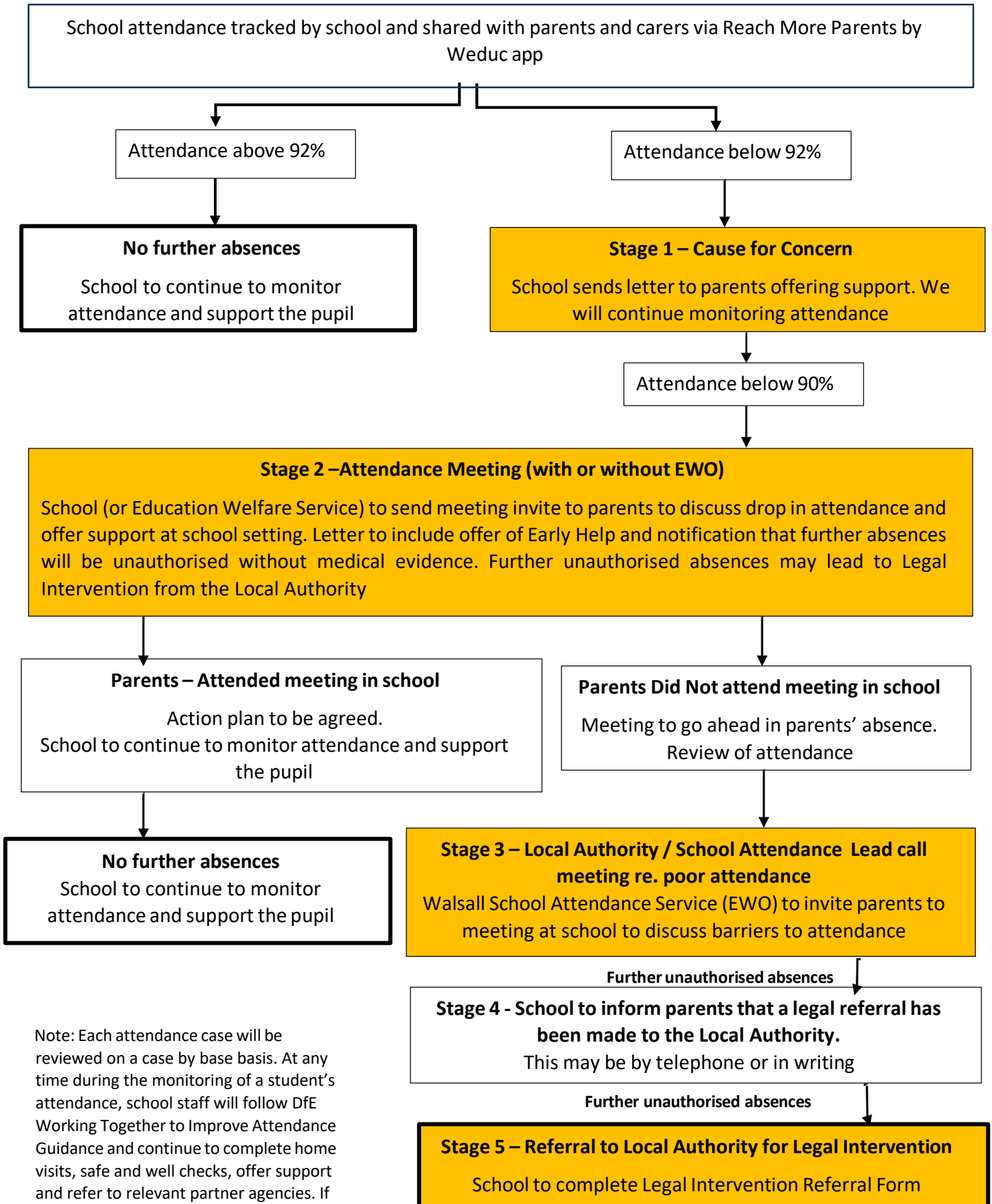
This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteachers. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Full Governing Body.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships and Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1 - School Attendance Escalation Procedure



Note: Each attendance case will be reviewed on a case by case basis. At any time during the monitoring of a student's attendance, school staff will follow DfE Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance and continue to complete home visits, safe and well checks, offer support and refer to relevant partner agencies. If required, the Local Authority traded EWO can support these interventions, if appropriate.

Appendix 2 - Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

Code	Definition	Scenario
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X		Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday/INSET day