



# **Albany Infant and Nursery School**

## **Attendance Policy**

**September 2021**



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### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Albany Infant and Nursery School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High achievement and a child being able to fulfil their true potential depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 All stakeholders– pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this and outline how the school looks to sustain and improve school attendance
- 1.3 The school will ensure that all stakeholders know of the policy and have access to it.

### **2. School's roles and responsibilities**

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Albany Infant and Nursery School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.
- 2.2 The Office Staff alongside the Head Teacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This will include ensuring that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with, are made available to staff, pupils, parents and governors. It also ensures that attendance issues are identified at an early stage through regular and ongoing monitoring and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3 Registration
- i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

#### Register Codes

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity

<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- ii) The register will be called promptly at 8.50 am and 1.15pm by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- iii) The registers will close at **9.30 am** and **1.30 pm**. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as an unauthorised absence. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be dealt with under the school's procedure in managing punctuality.

#### 2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.
- ii) Albany Infant and Nursery School recognises the clear links between attendance and pupil outcomes, and attendance and safeguarding children. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school and based on a professional judgement.

How absence is managed can be found on the school attendance procedure accompanying this policy (Appendix 1)

- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 5 school days of their return, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
  - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
    - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
    - a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
    - the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
  - (b) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand);

- (c) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
- (d) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- (e) in other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and for a very limited period (at the Heads discretion according to circumstances).

#### 2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

#### 2.6 Staff Training

The School will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

### **3. Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Office Staff will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Head Teacher, parents and the governing body. Attendance is monitored by whole school, year group and by class group. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.2 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

### **4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil outcomes. Albany Infant and Nursery School is committed to supporting parents and pupils in sustaining and improving attendance and the following measures are used to ensure policy and procedure can be applied fairly and consistently:

- Having in place an Attendance Policy that staff, pupils and parent/carers are familiar with.
- Promotion of the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- Following the Pupil Registration Regulations, particularly for accurate, up to date and correct usage of coding
- Robust systems for monitoring attendance and data to analyse absence patterns
- Setting of trigger point/thresholds
- Early intervention and a clear understanding of who does what and when
- Clear and timely communication with parent/carers concerns and expectations about attendance by: phone calls, letters, meetings in school or other venues and home visits.
- Identifying the causes for absence from pupils and parents point of view.
- Setting realistic targets and plans to support improved attendance.
- Supporting the most vulnerable pupils by: referral/signposting to other agencies, encouraging the return of pupils with catch up opportunities and reintegration plans
- Recording all actions in attendance case files/chronologies.
- Sending formal letters to parent/carers.

#### 4.2 Persistent Authorised Absence

There is an expectation that parents contact school to inform staff of the reason for an absence but Albany Infant and Nursery School has in place a system of first-day calling if this does not occur. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

How persistent absence is managed can be found in the schools Protocol for Absence accompanying this policy.

#### 4.3 Persistent Unauthorised Absence

In the event that a pupil is persistently deemed to have unauthorised absence (where a parent gives no reason for a pupil being absent from school) application of the schools protocol for monitoring persistent unauthorised absence will begin. The schools threshold for unauthorised absence is defined as more than 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 6 week rolling period.

How persistent unauthorised absence is managed can be found in the schools Protocol for Absence accompanying this policy.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. The schools threshold for lateness is defined as 6 late occasions over a 6 week rolling period.

How persistent lateness is managed can be found in the schools Protocol for Absence accompanying this policy.

4.5 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office and sign in using the signing in system.

4.6 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the school office.

### 5. Leave of Absence Requests

'.....headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'

5.1 Albany Infant and Nursery School will consider every application individually. Its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence requests other than in exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, using the schools documentation with accompanying appropriate evidence, at least 4 weeks in advance of the intended absence dates.

5.2 Parents must understand that sending their children to school every day is a legal requirement and good attendance and punctuality prior to a leave of absence request is not a permission for a leave of absence request to be authorised

5.3 Every request is treated as unique and comparisons are not made

5.4 Consistency in approach is a priority

5.5 Albany Infant and Nursery School will NOT authorise a leave of absence request during periods of national tests, ie SATS, phonics screening check.

5.6 The schools threshold for unauthorised absence is defined as more than 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 6 week rolling period.

How leave of requests are managed can be found in the schools Protocol for Absence accompanying this policy.

### 6 Issuing of Penalty Notices

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance or whereabouts but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. This includes where families take a holiday during term time.

- 6.1. In the vast majority of instances penalty notices will be the last resort where all other efforts to address non-attendance or poor punctuality have failed.
- 6.2. Albany Infant and Nursery School is committed to ensuring every possible measure and level of support has been provided (detailed 4.1) before making a recommendation that a penalty notice be requested from the Local Authority.
- 6.2. A recommendation for the LA to issue a penalty notice will always consider the following factors:
- Age of child
  - Number of children in the family
  - The possible effect on other siblings
  - The extent of the non attendance
  - Family history regarding school attendance
  - Previous convictions
  - Whether parenting support would be more appropriate to prosecution
- 6.3. In cases where a recommendation to issue a penalty notice is applied, this will always be supported with a robust evidence base to support the recommendation.
- 6.4. Parents must make themselves aware of the school thresholds for absence and punctuality. These are attached to this policy in the 'Protocol for Absence'
- 6.5. The penalty is set at £120 and should be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 21 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60. In line with the national requirements the penalty is always payable to the Local Authority.

## **7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

- 7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Albany School.
- 7.2 Albany School expects parents / carers will:
- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
  - support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
  - not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.
- 7.3 Parents will also be expected to:
- Notify Albany School on the first day of absence by telephone, text message, email or letter.
  - ensure their children arrive at school on time, wearing correct uniform, and with the right equipment for the day-where uniform is absent, pupils will be provided with this.
  - work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
  - contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives

## **8. Pupils' responsibilities**

- 8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

8.2 Pupils should attend school on time, ready to learn and should follow school procedures if they arrive late.

## **9. Governors' responsibilities**

9.1 The governing body of Albany Infant and Nursery School will ensure that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Governors will be updated regularly with details on attendance, absence and the number of pupils being closely monitored. The head teacher will also use national statistics to contextualise the schools attendance data.

## **10. Staff responsibilities**

10.1 Staff responsibilities are detailed in the school Protocol for Absence and Lateness.

10.2 In addition to the above as part of transition to another class or school an attendance certificate will be printed for any pupil where attendance or lateness is a concern and passed on to the next teacher/school so that they can be proactive in ensuring improvement.

## **11. Covid-19**

Covid-19 related absence is recorded using the latest DfE guidance which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

## **12. Conclusion**

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the school core values are upheld and supported. For example, good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style. It encourages children to want to have high levels of attendance and be proud of this. It allows us to be united as a school in maintaining a high expectation and sustaining schools for attendance. Good attendance helps to develop self-discipline and for pupils and parents to hold themselves to account, being punctual and not taking days out of school unnecessarily. Close monitoring of attendance also ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children. The best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly as attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development.



## **Albany Infant and Nursery School** **Protocol for Absence**

### **Operational (day to day)**

In the event that a pupil is not present after 9:30am the following protocol should be adhered to:

- Office staff to complete phone calls home and attendance paperwork to clarify the absence.
- All absences to be recorded on ScholarPack and where required, a professional judgement comment made by the member of staff who makes the phone call.

### **Monitoring absence and identification of persistent authorised absence**

- Authorised absence monitoring will be ongoing and completed by the office staff in conjunction with the head teacher. This is formally analysed each half term. Any attendance falling below 95% is a cause for concern and will prompt action.
- Where a child's absence falls between 90% and 95% the parents will be contacted by school to make them aware of the absence rate in the form of a letter. Each case is considered individually and allowances for genuine reasons for absence e.g. prolonged illnesses such as chickenpox which is common in an infant school.
- If there are further concerns or the attendance doesn't get any better, the parent is contacted for a second time in the form of a more formal letter. The letter will make the parent aware that this is due to persistent poor attendance and will outline how this is becoming a barrier to their child's learning and progress. This will include a request that the attendance must improve from the date the letter is sent or they will be referred to the head teacher
- If a parent is contacted for a third time within a school year, then this contact is to invite the parents into school for a meeting with the head teacher and a member of the office team or pastoral staff. This meeting will outline the pattern of absence, and summarise the last two contacts, detailing the impact that the poor absence is having on their child's academic and personal development. This will include a reminder about providing evidence where appropriate to support pupil absence (e.g. doctors note). Parents will be warned that a further decline in attendance without supporting evidence will result in a sharing of attendance data with outside agencies and a prompt further investigation will be made. This may include a request being made to the local authority to take appropriate action e.g. issue a penalty notice.
- In the event that there is still no improvement, then the head teacher will pass the case file onto the Family Service Enforcement Lead and inform the parent in writing.

### **Monitoring absence and identification of persistent unauthorised absence**

- Ongoing monitoring identifies those pupils who have met the schools threshold for unauthorised absence which is defined as more than 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 6 week rolling period.
- The head teacher issues a warning letter of penalty notices for unauthorised absence.
- The following day from the date on this letter is the first day of a 30 day monitoring period where unauthorised absence should not continue to reach a 3 day (6 sessions) threshold over a 6 week rolling period.

- In the event that unauthorised absence continues to rise and meets the 3 day threshold then the head teacher will request a penalty notice to be issued by the LA.
- On the same day, a further letter accompanying this policy will be sent to the parent informing them that a request has been made to the local authority to issue a penalty notice as a result of persistent unauthorised absence.

### **Leave of absence requests**

- On receipt of a leave of absence request from a parent and accompanying evidence is provided, the head teacher will deem it to be 'exceptional' or not. A consideration of the following will be part of the decision making process.
  - \*the nature of the event for which the leave is sought
  - \*the frequency of the request
  - \*whether the parent gave advanced notice
  - \*the pupils attainment, attendance and impact on learning
  - \*the pupils ability to catch up on missed schooling
- It must be stressed that these are considerations and NOT criteria that if met, deem a request for leave of absence 'exceptional', therefore authorised.
- The request will be unauthorised or authorised
- If unauthorised, the return slip on the form will be returned with an attached letter which will inform parents, that unauthorised leave of more than 3 days (6 sessions) over a 6 week rolling period can lead to a penalty notice fine of up to £120 for each pupil being issued and that this will be requested from the LA if the pupil is removed for the period stated on the leave of absence request.
- If pupil is removed from school for the period requested, then on return to school a further letter is sent to the parent informing them that a request to issue a penalty notice has been made as result of their actions.
- On the same day that this letter is sent a letter is sent to the LA requesting a penalty notice to be issued.



## **Albany Infant and Nursery School** **Protocol for Lateness**

*'Late' is defined as arriving at school after 8:55am (doors open at 8.50am and are left open until 8.55am to allow for parents with more than one child) therefore without a mark in the class register*

### **Operational (day to day)**

In the event that a pupil is late, the following protocol should be adhered to...

- A late pupil will arrive at the school office. The office staff will acknowledge they are present in school and record this on ScholarPack.
- The child should be given an N code on the class register by the class teacher until the office staff change it at the office on SIMS.

### **Monitoring lateness and identification of persistent lateness**

- Lateness monitoring will be ongoing by the office staff in conjunction with the head teacher. This will include identification of the time a pupil is late and where there is potential for the threshold for unauthorised lateness to be met. Any pupil who has accrued 4 occasions late across a 6 week period is deemed to be a cause for concern and will prompt action in the form of a letter.
- If the lateness does not improve, a further letter is sent outlining that should no further improvement be made, parents will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher and a member of the office staff. This meeting will highlight to the parent how this is becoming a barrier to their child's learning and progress. This will include a request that punctuality must improve or the child may be fetched at the head teacher's discretion.