



**Altarnun Primary School**

Part of the Athena Learning Trust

# Altarnun Primary Pupil Attendance Policy

## **Review**

Reviewed on: November 2024

Reviewed by: Primary LGB

Review period: 3 years

Version: 1.1





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This policy is the responsibility of: **Christina Medland**

This policy is subject to agreement by the Local Board of Governors on 28th November 2024

This Attendance Policy applies to Altarnun Primary School, and all governors and staff of the school must abide by this policy which has been adopted in accordance with and pursuant to the Athena Trust Pupil Welfare Policy.

It is the responsibility of the local governing body and Principal of the school to ensure that their school and its staff adhere to this policy. In implementing this policy school staff must take account of any advice given to them by the CEO and/or Board of Trustees.

This policy is subject to the Athena Trust Pupil Welfare Policy and the Scheme of Delegation approved for the school. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the Athena Trust Pupil Welfare Policy and the Scheme of Delegation and any specific Scheme or alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees takes precedence. If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation of this, the CEO should be consulted.



## **Altarnun Primary School Attendance Policy**

At Altarnun Primary School we firmly believe that all pupils benefit from outstanding school attendance. To this end, we will do all we can to ensure that our pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. In order for a pupil's attendance record to be deemed very good, it must be 97% or above:

100%- Outstanding Attendance

97% - Very Good Attendance

96% - Good Attendance

## **Aims and objectives**

We intend to establish systems and practices which will:

- Create an ethos in which excellent attendance is the norm.
- Maintain a safe, secure environment where pupils feel valued and welcome, thereby positively encouraging attendance.
- Raise pupil awareness of the importance of punctuality and uninterrupted attendance, and encourage in pupils a sense of responsibility.
- Celebrate excellent school attendance.
- Support pupils and families who experience difficulties maintaining good school attendance.

## **Expectations**

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend every day that school is open to them
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day



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We expect that all parents who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- Contact the school before 8.30am on the morning of each day of the pupil's absence by calling the school office
- All absences should be followed up in writing, explaining the reason and date of absence or a medical appointment card. Any unexplained absence is treated as an unauthorised absence
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

### **Altarnun Primary School has a responsibility to ensure that all teachers:**

- Complete registers accurately and punctually during every registration period and lesson
- Assist the school secretary in following up any unexplained absences upon the pupil's return to school
- Inform the Safeguarding Team/Principal of concerns
- Be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Principal

### **Responding to Non-Attendance**

Pupil attendance is continually monitored by the school secretary. When a pupil does not attend school, the school will respond in the following manner:

- If no telephone call is received confirming absence, the Secretary will Dojo/call the 1st emergency contact registered on Arbor to establish a reason for absence.
- If a pupil has unexplained absence for three consecutive days with no contact from contacts, a home visit will take place on the third day.
- For any pupils with unexplained absence that are children in need or under a child protection plan, the School Secretary will report to DSL/Principal immediately for advice.



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- In the event of no response being received for the absence, a letter will be sent home. If no response is received within 10 days of the date of the letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Periods of absence from school of 4 days or more will require medical evidence to be provided. This can be in the form of an appointment card, appointment letter, Doctor's letter, photograph of prescription or medication prescribed, screenshot of appointment text message, appointment email.

### **Pupils who are dual-registered**

Where pupils are registered at more than solely the Altarnun Primary School setting, the school works closely with these providers to monitor pupil attendance and to follow-up on any non-attendance promptly. This includes implementing appropriate systems for non-attendance and persistent non-attendance.

### **There are 4 stages of dealing with absenteeism at Altarnun Primary School**

#### **Stage 1**

A letter will be sent to the parent of any pupil whose attendance falls below 96%, this will be accompanied by a phone call by a member of staff to offer support to improve attendance. This is monitored for a period of 2 weeks.

#### **Stage 2**

If there is no marked improvement, parents will receive Letter 2 and be invited in for a meeting with a member of staff. An attendance support plan will be agreed on to address any issues preventing a child from attending school.

#### **Stage 3**

If no improvement is seen within a further 2 weeks, a letter informing parents that any further absence will require medical evidence will be issued. This letter will explain that any absences following stage 2 will require medical evidence, otherwise they will be unauthorised absence.



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### Stage 4

At this point an attendance action plan meeting will take place with a member of the senior leadership team and other relevant staff. If parents miss the first meeting it will be rearranged, if they miss the second it will take place even if they choose not to attend. If no improvement is seen in attendance, the case is referred to the local council education welfare team to begin legal proceedings.

Continued failure to contact the school to report a child's absence may result in a referral to the school's Safeguarding Team, MASH/MARU Team or the police for a welfare check.

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the school may result in further action, by either a referral to appear before the Governor's Attendance Panel, issue of a Penalty Notice, an application for an Education Supervision Order or court prosecution.

At any stage of absenteeism, we will involve our pastoral team and education welfare service. This involvement will be most supportive and pronounced for children at risk of persistent absence or currently persistently absent (i.e. below 90% attendance).

### **Lateness**

The school day begins at 8.30am with morning greeting. Morning registration takes place at the start of Lesson 1 at 8.45am

Morning registration – 8.45am to 9.15am. Registers are closed at 9.15am

- If a pupil arrives late to registration, after 8.45am, they must arrive via the school office.
- If a pupil arrives late to registration a Late attendance mark will be issued. Where appropriate, reasons for lateness are investigated and responded to in the appropriate manner.
- Lateness after registration closes is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) and parents will be notified of this absence via Dojo parent communication system.

### **Absences that the school is unable to authorise include:**

- Holidays during term time



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- Arrival after the registers close at 9:15am without prior notification
- Shopping trips, even if this is for school uniform
- Birthday celebrations
- Looking after a relative/pets
- Tiredness due to extra-curricular activities
- All unexplained absences

### **Medical Appointments**

Parents are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours but where this is not possible the school should be notified in advance by emailing or sending a letter to the school, addressed to the School Secretary. Where it is not possible to arrange appointments outside of school hours, pupils are encouraged to attend school either side of their appointment.

### **Religious Holidays**

We will authorise absence for major religious holidays. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform us in advance of their intention to keep their child at home. If parents do not inform the school any days missed will be recorded as unauthorised absences. Requests for extended absence for religious observances should be made in writing to the Principal .

### **Holidays**

The school holiday dates are published in advance on the school website and it is essential that parents take their family holidays during the school holidays. It is the school's policy not to authorise absence during term time for holidays and any absence of this nature will be recorded as unauthorised. Should parents choose to remove their child from school for a holiday during term, they may be required to attend a meeting with a member of the Principal to discuss this absence.



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We recognise that there may be occasions where a parent feels there are extenuating reasons for requesting leave during term time. In such circumstances we advise parents to write to the Principal outlining the reason for the request and the dates the pupil will be absent from school. Parents will be asked to complete an Absence Request form. The Principal will inform parents of their decision in writing.

Requests for long periods of absence will not be authorised and a meeting with the Principal and relevant members of staff will be required. Prolonged unauthorised absences may put your child's place at Altarnun Primary School at risk.

If parents take their children on holiday during term time without authorisation the School will apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1966 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006. The fine from September 2024 will be £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, increasing to £160 if paid after this date, but within 28 days. Failure to pay can result in a referral to court.

Please note that a Penalty Notice is issued to each parent in respect of each child not attending school. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility or who has care of the child.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

### **The Legal Framework**

Regular school attendance of children of compulsory school age is the responsibility of the parent and is a legal requirement in accordance with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Parents are committing an offence if they fail to comply with this legislation and legal action can be instigated.

Penalty Notices are not the only means of disposal for these offences. Depending on the circumstances of each case, the Local Authority may alternatively decide to issue a caution, or to prosecute the offence in a magistrates' court, or to take no further action.





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Penalty Notices for offences under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 must be issued by an authorised officer in accordance with Section 444A of the Education Act 1996. The practice in Cornwall Council is for all Penalty Notices to be issued by the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority under any of the following circumstances:

- An excluded pupil found in a public place
- Unauthorised holiday during term time
- Persistent lateness after registers have closed