



**Alma
Primary**

עולם חסד יבנה
A world built on kindness

Alma Primary Attendance Policy inc. Children with health needs who cannot attend school

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Governor responsible: *Learning and Children's committee*
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Policy Development

| Change | Responsible | Date |
|---|-------------|-------|
| GB responsibility | MJS | Jan19 |
| Policies update and addition of section 2 for children with medical needs; clarification of FPNs. | VSR & MJS | Jan23 |
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Alma Primary Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Regular attendance at school is an essential element in ensuring that each child has full access to their learning entitlement. In addition, the Headteacher and governors believe that it is important for children to arrive at school on time in order to ensure they start the day calmly, as part of the class, and that they avoid disrupting the learning of others. Attendance is an element of school performance monitored by Ofsted in their inspection of the school.

As such, we ask all families to ensure that their children come to school each day on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn, provided that they are fit and healthy. The Governing Body and Headteacher have legal duties regarding registration and attendance, contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, 2010, 2011 and 2013
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting children at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Alma Safeguarding Policy
- Alma Children Missing Education Policy
- Alma Data Protection Policy
- Alma SEND Policy
- Alma Policy on Health, Medicines and Supporting Children with Medical Conditions

Under these regulations the governing body are responsible for ensuring that the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, school staff put in place appropriate procedures to encourage good attendance, including striving to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who are prevented from coming to school, due to medical issues or other complications.

Section 1: Attendance

2. Registration

School registers are legal documents and every care must be taken to ensure that they are filled in accurately and correctly. Alma Primary registers are completed electronically on the school's MIS

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(Scholarpack), by each class teacher in the morning and afternoon. Registration is an integral part of the school day and all children need to be present in their classrooms at the start of the school day in order to be marked present.

The organisation of registration at Alma Primary:

- Registration is at 8:40am. Children arriving after this time must be signed in by a parent or carer at the school office.
- The register will remain open from 8:40am to 9:00am.
- Children arriving after the start time for school, but while the register is still open, can be marked as 'late' but present for the session.
- Children arriving after the register has closed are marked as absent. This can be authorised if a satisfactory reason is given, or left unauthorised.
- After 9am in the morning and 1:15pm in the afternoon the admin staff print a fire list for the day.

3. Authorised absence

Absence from school is regulated under the DfE's School Attendance Guidance (2013).

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carers. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carers writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Under the guidance, only 'exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence'.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. At Alma Primary, the Headteacher will consider each request individually, taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent/carers gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority, consequently not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent/carers takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

In general, absences for holidays during term times, or absences to participate in life cycle events including weddings will not be authorised, unless they meet the criteria of being exceptional circumstances.

4. Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carers, therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carers.

In circumstances where an absence is judged to be unauthorised, the school will normally refer the matter to the local authority who will produce a fixed penalty fine (FPN). FPNs are issued to both parents and for each child who is absent, so a family with 3 children could receive 6 FPNs in all. Parents who have not paid an FPN by the 28th day can expect to be prosecuted and receive a fine and a criminal record.

5. Signing in and Out

Parents/carers who collect a child early, or bring them in late (e.g. for a medical appointment) need to sign them in or out at the school office.

6. Unplanned absence

If a child is unexpectedly going to be absent due to sickness, a parent/carer is asked to email or call the school office on the morning of the absences to explain the situation.

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. Once registration is closed, the school office will complete the electronic register with the relevant information provided via the parent/carer has contacted the school office and authorise the absence where appropriate. Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If no explanation has been given regarding a child's unexpected absence, the school office will endeavour to contact a parent/carer as soon as possible that morning, in order to ascertain the reason for the absence.

If parents/carers develop a persistent pattern of not informing the office of children's unexpected absence, this will become a cause for concern.

7. Planned absence

If a parent/carer wishes to take a child out of school, i.e. because the child has a medical appointment, they must complete the school's absence request form (see appendix A).

The school will provide support to children who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the child's parents/carers to arrange schoolwork, as soon as the child is able to cope with it, or part-time education at school. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the child, their parents and relevant members of staff.

For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, the school will act in accordance with section two of this policy, below.

We believe that there are legitimate reasons for a child to miss school, for example, a special event. We expect parents/carers to contact the school at least four weeks in advance, and the Headteacher will consider these applications on an individual basis. The Headteacher may authorise leave of absence from the school if there are exceptional circumstances and it is considered to be beneficial to the child. Application will be considered on an individual basis and the Headteacher will also consider when making the decision, the level of attendance the child has achieved and the rate of academic progress made.

In some cases it may be appropriate for the class teacher to supply learning materials for the child during the absence.

Section two below addresses issues relating to children with medical needs who are unable to attend school.

8. Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence to determine the reason for the absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences the parent/carer will be asked to visit the school to discuss the situation. Alma Primary will ensure the parent/carer understands the consequences of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance and, where possible and appropriate, will put in place supportive measures.

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Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will notify the school office. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parent/carer.

The governors reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

9. Reporting attendance

Children's overall attendance (%), unauthorised absences from school (%), and number of times late to school will be reported to parents/carers on their child's end of year academic report (End of Year Celebration), alongside targets for improvement in punctuality and attendance, where appropriate.

The Headteacher will present attendance data to governors on a termly basis

Section 2: Children with health needs who cannot attend school

10. Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, the school will follow this policy to support the child's learning. Where relevant the lead member of staff responsible for long term absence will contact external support services, to put in place further educational support.

11. Definitions

Children who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs may include those with:

- Physical health issues;
- Physical injuries;
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues and emotional difficulties;
- Progressive conditions;
- Chronic or terminal illnesses.

Where these have been appropriately diagnosed by a medical professional.

Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend any of the following:

- **Hospital school:** a special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment;
- **Home tuition:** Barnet or the child's Local Authority if not Barnet, may provide home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and children on occasions where children are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment;
- **Medical PRUs:** Barnet or the child's Local Authority if not Barnet, may provide education for children unable to attend their registered school due to their medical needs.

12. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for children who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented;

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- Ensuring the school has provision in place for regular review of the arrangements made for children who cannot attend school due to their medical needs;
- Ensuring the school has provision in place so that the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of children are clear and understood by all;
- Ensuring the school has robust systems in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents, for both on- and off-site activities;
- Ensuring the school has provision in place so that staff with responsibility for supporting children with additional health needs are appropriately trained;
- Approving and reviewing this policy at least every two years.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Working with the governing board to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting children with additional health needs;
- Working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of children;
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet children's health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon;
- Appointing an inclusion leader who is the named member of staff responsible for children with additional health needs and who liaises with parents, children, Local Authority staff, key workers and others involved in the child's care;
- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual children;
- Ensuring that appropriate training is arranged for staff with responsibility for supporting children with additional health needs;
- Ensuring that the Inclusion leader provides teachers who support children with additional health needs with suitable information relating to a child's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the child;
- Reporting annually to the governing board on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of children;
- Notifying the Local Authority staff when a child is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs;

The Alma Inclusion Leader is the named member of staff responsible for supporting children who are unable to attend school because of their health needs. The Inclusion leader is responsible for:

- Actively monitoring child progress and reintegration into school;
- Supplying children's education providers with information about children's capabilities, progress and outcomes, where appropriate and agreed with parents/carers;
- Liaising with the headteacher, education providers and parents to determine children's programmes of study whilst they are absent from school;
- Keeping families of relevant children informed about school events and encouraging communication between children who are absent due to medical conditions with their peers;
- Providing a link between children and their parents/carers, and Local Authority staff.

Class teachers and support staff will be responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of children's health needs;

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- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with additional health needs to participate fully and ensuring children are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason;
- Understanding their role in supporting children with additional health needs and ensuring they attend the required training;
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their children through the appropriate and lawful sharing of individual children's health needs;
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency;
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in school.

Parents will be expected to:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible;
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay;
- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs;
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

13. Managing absence due to long term medical needs

For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, the Inclusion Leader will notify Local Authority Staff, who will take responsibility for the child and their education.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the Inclusion Leader will liaise with LA staff to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the child's absence.

For hospital admissions, the Inclusion Leader will liaise with LA staff regarding the programme that should be followed while the child is in hospital.

The Inclusion Leader with LA staff will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the child which will allow the school, the LA and any external provider of the child's education to work together.

The Inclusion Leader will monitor child attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a child is, or should be, receiving education other than at school.

The school will only remove a child who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where:

- The child has been certified by the school's medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and
- Neither the child nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

A child unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent and appropriate medical certification, even if the LA has become responsible for the child's education.

14. Support for children

Where a child has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the child's needs and how these may be best met with LA staff, relevant medical professionals, parents/carers and, where appropriate, the child.

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The school will support children with additional health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, making reasonable adjustments to children's programmes of study, where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.

Children admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned.

During a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the child's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes. In some cases this will include support for the provision of appropriate work, depending on the capacity of the child.

Whilst a child is away from school, the school will work with families to ensure the child can successfully remain in touch with their school including via:

- School newsletters and emails;
- Invitations to school events;
- Cards or letters from peers and staff

Where appropriate, the school will provide the child's education provider with relevant information including data on attainment, curriculum materials and resources.

To help ensure a child with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations will be considered:

- A personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the named staff member;
- Access to additional support in school;
- Online access to the curriculum/lessons from home;
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms;
- Rest period and places to rest at school.

Where relevant, the school will also take account of the potential impact on any siblings at Alma Primary of a child who is unable to attend school. This may include in class support or support from external professionals, where this is possible. In addition, the school will also take account of the potential impact of a long-term absence on the child's class, providing a safe space for children to understand the absence and to maintain contact.

15. Reintegration

When a child is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with medical advice and Local Authority input.

The school will work with the family and LA when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school.

As far as possible, the child will be given support to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school. The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the child.

For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the child's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill child or their parents/carers in the early stages of their absence.

The school is aware that some children will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the child, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

The reintegration plan will consider:

- The date for planned reintegration, once known;
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration;

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- Details of the named member of staff with responsibility for the child (normally the Inclusion Leader);
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved;
- Details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period;
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration;
- Follow-up procedures.

The school will encourage children and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

16. Information sharing

It is essential that all information about children with additional health needs is kept up-to-date. To protect confidentiality, all information-sharing techniques, e.g. staff noticeboards, will be agreed with the child and their parent/carer in advance of being used and updated as necessary. All teachers, LSAs, supply and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures, via a noticeboard in the staffroom.

Parents will be made aware of their own rights and responsibilities regarding confidentiality and information sharing. To help achieve this, the school will:

- Ensure this policy and other relevant policies are easily available and accessible;
- Provide the child and their parents with a copy of the policy on information sharing;
- Ask parents to sign a consent form which clearly details the organisations and individuals that their child's health information will be shared with and which methods of sharing will be used;
- Consider how friendship groups and peers may be able to assist children with additional health needs.

When a child is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision, the school will ensure the appropriate information is received to allow for a smooth return to the school. The Inclusion Leader will liaise with the hospital or other tuition service as appropriate.

17. Record keeping

In accordance with school data management procedures, written records will be kept of all medicines administered to children. Proper record keeping will protect both staff and children and provide evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

18. Training

Where a child returning to school has ongoing care needs, appropriate healthcare professionals will be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required. Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support children with additional health needs. Staff will be trained in a timely manner to assist with a child's return to school.

Once a child's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training, normally one week before the child's anticipated return. Parents/carers of children with additional health needs may provide specific advice but will not be the sole trainer of staff.

19. Examinations and assessments

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The Inclusion Leader will liaise with the alternative provision provider over planning and examination course requirements, where appropriate.

Relevant assessment information will be provided to the alternative provision provider if required.

Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for children with permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be submitted by the school, or LA if more appropriate, as early as possible.

20. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and the Headteacher will report on attendance each term. The governing body will examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that attendance is high. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. The rates of attendance will be reported in the annual review of the School Development Plan.

Alma Primary

Pupil Leave of Absence Request Form

Please be aware that for children over the age of 5, absences during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Where an absence or part of an absence has been authorised parents are expected to support children to complete any work set for them by their class teacher.

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Name of child | | | Date request made | | |
| Class | | Absences this year | | | |
| First day & date of absence (include time if part day) | | Day & date of return to school (include time if part day) | | Number of days/time requested | |
| Reason for absence | | | | | |
| Other information | | | | | |

Please sign below and return this form to your child's class teacher at least 10 days before requested absence.

Parent/carers name _____ Relationship to child _____

Signed _____ Date _____

School Office use only

Class teacher:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Summary of lessons & key activities during the absence period: | |
| Any academic concerns generated by request: | |
| Signed: | Date: |

Head teacher:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Leave of absence granted YES/NO (if no, reason): | |
| Signed: | Date: |