

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

**September 2024**

At Alexandra Park Junior School, we believe that good attendance is essential for all our pupils if they are to gain the maximum benefit from the education that we provide. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life, ensuring they are 'school ready, work ready, life ready.'

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school we will support families to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Ultimately it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school every day.

### **Our Aim**

At Alexandra Park Junior School we aim to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in establishing the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning opportunities, progress and attainment;
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly and confidently, with continuity through the curriculum;
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of their legal responsibilities around school attendance;
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

### **Our Expectation**

At Alexandra Park Junior School, we expect that all pupils/families to:

- Attend school every day
- Arrive at school punctually
- Discuss promptly with the school office any problems that may affect school attendance
- Contact the school office by RINGING THE SCHOOL, BEFORE 9.30AM TO REPORT ABSENCE, ON 0161 770 8321.
- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their pupils are collected at the correct time, and inform school if there is a delay

*Alexandra Park Junior School, Brook Lane, Oldham, OL8 2BE*  
*Headteacher: Mrs J.L. Seabright BEd NPQH PgCert*



- Where possible, make healthcare appointments outside of school hours, if not possible, evidence of appointment date and time will need to be provided.

**Expectations of school:**

- Provide a safe, secure and happy learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child’s or parent’s concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor individual children’s attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents’ via phone, text or class dojo, requesting information before 10am if their child is not in school, and the absence has not been explained.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- When pupil’s attendance falls below 95% school will inform parents and if a pupils attendance falls below 90% again parents will be informed and advice from other agencies may be sought
- Inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils

Example absence (authorised/unauthorised)

<b>Authorised absences:</b>	<b>Unauthorised absences:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genuine illness of the pupil Hospital/dental/doctor’s appointment for the pupil</li> <li>• Major religious observances</li> <li>• Visits to prospective new schools</li> <li>• External exams or educational assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holidays in term time</li> <li>• Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park/weddings</li> <li>• A birthday treat</li> <li>• Oversleeping due to a late night</li> <li>• Looking after other children/other family member</li> <li>• Appointments for other family members</li> </ul>

**Registers, Punctuality and Lateness:**

- Punctuality to school is crucial, lateness into school causes disruption to that individual’s learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.
- Gates open at 8.30am daily and pupil MUST be at their class entrance point by 8.40am. Doors open at 8.40am and close at 8.45am. Children MUST then make their way via the front entrance.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Registration takes place at 8.40am
- Any child who arrives in class after 8.50 am will be registered as Late while the Register is open ('L' code in the register).
- The registers are legally closed by the office 25 minutes after the start of the school day. This means that if your child arrives late, after the Register is closed at 9.05am, this will be classed as an unauthorised absence ('U' code in the register). This counts as half a day’s absence.

*Alexandra Park Junior School, Brook Lane, Oldham, OL8 2BE  
Headteacher: Mrs J.L. Seabright BEd NPQH PgCert*



## **Pupil Leaving During the School Day**

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior knowledge or permission from the school
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Evidence of appointment MUST be provided if during school hours.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, within school hours, parents are to report to the School Office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site. Parents will need to sign their child out of school and state if they will be returning to school.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

## **Leave of Absence**

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence (holidays) will NOT be authorised during term time. All leave of absences must be reported via the 'Absence request form', obtained from the school office.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (Appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

We take holidays during term time very seriously and no holidays will be authorised. Holidays during term time have been the main issue with attendance falling short and we aim to with parents support raise our attendance by having less extended leave. We understand certain circumstances cannot be avoided however we ask all parents to try and wait until school holidays or go as close to school holidays as possible.

If pupils are absence for 20 consecutive school days and do not return on the 21<sup>st</sup> day, pupils will be taken off roll and parents will need to reapply for a school place via admission at Oldham Council.

If a holiday is taken before school finishes in July and they have not returned in September this will be counted towards the 20 school days, extended leave does not start again in September as it used too.

## **Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices will be issued upon return from extended leave if leave is longer than 5 school days, penalty warnings will also be sent if attendance has fallen below the expected level of 96% and is not improving after meetings and action plans being put in place, if things do not improve a penalty notice will be issued. See Appendix 1 for a breakdown.

*Alexandra Park Junior School, Brook Lane, Oldham, OL8 2BE  
Headteacher: Mrs J.L. Seabright BEd NPQH PgCert*



Appendix 1

## Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance have changed from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by the DfE, the following changes have come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

### National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

**Please note:** The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

### Per Parent\*, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent\*, for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

### \*Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.



*Alexandra Park Junior School*

*To Learn, Be Happy and Achieve Our Best*

PROUD  
TO BE  
PART OF



THE  
Pinnacle  
LEARNING TRUST

*Alexandra Park Junior School, Brook Lane, Oldham, OL8 2BE  
Headteacher: Mrs J.L. Seabright BEd NPQH PgCert*