



ALSOP HIGH SCHOOL

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Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The Government has set a minimum target of **97%** attendance that all students must achieve during the academic year. At Alsop High School, we place a lot of emphasis on ensuring all students meet this target. The reason for this is because there is evidence which supports the theory that attendance and attainment are linked. We encourage all students to aim for excellent levels of attendance to support academic progress across the curriculum.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance (www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures (www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance)

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census (www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.05pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents may notify the school of an unplanned absence by calling 0151 235 1200 and selecting option 1. Parents may speak to a member of the attendance team or leave a recorded message on the school's answer service.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents may notify the school of a medical or dental appointment during school hours by calling 0151 235 1200 and selecting option 1. Parents may speak to a member of the attendance team or leave a recorded message on the school's answer service. Parents may also provide written notification of an appointment addressed to their child's Form Tutor or Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year. Parents may also inform the attendance office in person by visiting the school attendance office during school hours.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Punctuality is monitored weekly by the attendance team, form tutors and Heads of Year/Assistance Heads of Year. There are sanctions in place that are consistently applied to all students in each year group.

If parents are aware that their child is going present themselves to school late, they should contact the attendance office as soon as possible by calling 0151 235 1200 and selecting option 1.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are notified of their child's attendance annually in the written end-of-year report which is issued at parents evening. Parents may also be notified during correspondence updating them regarding their child's progress.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Before deciding whether to authorise leave of absence, the headteacher will consider

- the impact for the student's academic progress of any absence
- the pupils attendance over the academic year
- whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for 'exceptional circumstances' and an **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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
- Bereavement/ funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling – the headteacher should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- A serious illness of a close relative
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence

- Weddings of parents and siblings. – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Unauthorised absence include:

- Shopping days
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments
- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Persistent lateness due to taking a younger sibling to school. The school takes the view that it is the parents responsibility to ensure all of their children attend school regularly and on time.

Examples of unauthorised absence will not be approved.

Where the school identifies patterns of unauthorised absence in a child's attendance, the school will initiate contact through meetings, letters, telephone calls, emails, home visits, etc, via the school/home liaison officer, in order to discuss attendance and how to support and improve overall attendance to school.

Study leave – study leave is not granted by default, and is only granted to pupils in year 11. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise in school

Flexi-schooling requests – flexi-schooling is a way in which children can attend school part-time – legally. Any request for this arrangement must be made by the child's parent **AND** be agreed by the Headteacher.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school has adopted a number of measures to promote excellent levels of attendance for all pupils. It is the school's belief that this leads to better educational outcomes where pupils attend school and meet the minimum target of 97%

- Attendance data is published weekly and displayed around the school allowing pupils, form groups and year groups to compare their attendance
- Raising the profile of attendance around the school
- Pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own attendance

- Rewards are used to promote excellent levels of attendance during assembly, form periods and lessons
- First day response – the attendance office will contact those parents who have not informed the school of an absence
- Targeted support to encourage improvements in attendance, informing parents and students of progress
- Emphasising the link between excellent levels of attendance, educational attainment and future prospects

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day that a child is ill, except in exceptional circumstances, such as a long term debilitating illness, where a child is hospitalised and medical evidence has been provided, a bereavement of a close relative, etc.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Pupil's attendance is monitored weekly and patterns of poor attendance are recognised earlier. Pupils whose attendance is at or around 90% are targeted to encourage them to attend school regularly.

Attendance data is communicated regularly with HOY/AHOY in order to enable earlier intervention and targeting of those pupils to support improvements in attendance.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Absences are monitored closely by the school/home liaison officer to identify patterns and intervene earlier, to support progress towards excellent levels of attendance.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The executive board of the school's governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher and senior leader for attendance to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and holding the senior leader and leader for attendance to account.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 Senior Leader and Leader for Attendance

The senior leader and leader for attendance are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The senior leader and leader for attendance also support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and liaise with relevant personnel to ensure that policies are consistently adhered to and provide leadership to this area.

7.4 The school/home liaison officer/attendance officers

The school/home liaison officer/attendance officers:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to relevant HOY/Senior Leader/Leader for attendance
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.5 Form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.6 Attendance office staff

Attendance office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Attendance office staff are expected to initiate contact with parents to discuss reasons for absence.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leader for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
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
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	Not required to be in school	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