



Alderman White School

A member of The White Hills Park Trust

# Attendance Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Alderman White School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We recognise the importance of regular attendance and the impact that it can have on student success both academically and socially.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. This is supported by other policies including our Anti-bullying policy, Behaviour policy, Teaching and Learning policy and Safeguarding policy.

We expect that students will be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We aim to build relationships with parents and our students to help support excellent attendance and punctuality.

### 1.1 Legislation and Statutory Requirements

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regularly attending school or otherwise.

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents have a legal responsibility for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. If a child fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence.

This policy is in line with the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

Schools and academies are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all students who are registered at the school.

### 1.2 Key Staff Introduction

Although key members of staff have been detailed below, the tutor will also play a key role in monitoring attendance and supporting improvement where necessary.

Name	Role
Annwen Mellors	Headteacher
Katie Hodgkinson	Assistant Headteacher and SLT attendance lead (Senior Attendance Champion)
Linda Philpot	Attendance officer and EWO

If you need to report an absence or would like to discuss your child's attendance, please contact Linda Philpot (Attendance Officer) using the contact details below:

Phone: 0115 9175959

Email: [attendance@aldermanwhite.school](mailto:attendance@aldermanwhite.school)

## 2. Policy Aims

For a child to reach their educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. We aim for every child to attend well and arrive on time for school every day providing them with a good foundation on which to be successful. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and parents/carers the importance of regular, and punctual, attendance.

From September 2024 our target is average attendance of at least 96%.

### 2.1 Expectations

We expect that our students will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- Inform a member of staff of any issues or problems that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect that parents will:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly.
- Contact the school prior to the start of the school day when their child is absent.
- Support their child in ensuring that they are punctual every day.
- Communicate any concerns they have which may prevent their child from attending school.

Parents and students can expect that the school will:

- Record attendance accurately and efficiently and provide updates regarding attendance.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Intervene where appropriate to ensure that any issues that may prevent a student from attending school is resolved.

## 3. Legal responsibilities relating to attendance

Once a child is of compulsory school age, they must receive suitable full-time education. Once you have registered your child at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to attend school regularly, you are at risk of getting a penalty notice or being prosecuted in court (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996). Information for parents and carers is here [Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/27/fining-parents-for-taking-their-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/) and the legislation is here [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/100/contents/part-1/section-1)

Alderman White School is responsible for the accurate recording of attendance each day.

We aim to build positive relationships with both students and their parents, providing support to parents in meeting their legal obligations relating to attendance.

## 4. In-school attendance responsibilities

### 4.1 The Governing body and Trust are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school record/s attendance accurately in the register, and share the required information with the DfE and local authorities
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keep/s them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most, through termly attendance review meetings
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- If the school has an attendance issue working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance, including with teachers from across the trust, as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.

#### 4.2 The Headteacher and SLT are responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

#### 4.3 The Trust Attendance Lead and Central Attendance team are responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the trust
- Working more intensively with schools who require support to improve attendance
- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries
- Liaising with the DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support programmes (such as the DFE Attendance Hubs)
- Organising and leading the Trust Attendance Network meetings
- Providing bespoke support around Attendance to each school

#### 4.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

#### 4.5 The Schools attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher/head of school
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/SLT when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Delivering or organising the delivery of targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

#### 4.6 The Schools Progress leaders are responsible for:

- Supporting the actions taken by the Attendance Officer to improve the attendance of individual students and will lead on promoting good attendance and punctuality with their year group.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Ensure good practice relating to attendance within their tutor team and will monitor the attendance of all students in their year group. All concerns are passed on to the Attendance Officer in regular attendance strategy meetings.

#### 4.7 Tutors and Class teachers are responsible for:

- Tutors are responsible for completing daily registers appropriately, promoting good attendance with their tutees and pursuing poor attendance.
- Class teachers are responsible for prompt and accurate completion of lesson registers (within the first 10 minutes of every lesson) and for raising a 'suspicious absence' if they notice a student has been present in school but is missing from their lesson without their knowledge.

### 5. Promoting good attendance

Alderman White School will seek regular opportunities to promote good attendance. This will be achieved through regular contact with parents and assemblies and tutor activities which promote good attendance. Students will be encouraged to understand impacts of poor attendance and punctuality and will be offered support in improvement where required.

#### **Recognising excellent attendance**

We will recognise excellent attendance and where students have made a concerted effort to improve their attendance.

#### **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets exists and the Deputy Headteacher is responsible for overseeing this work.

### 6. The registration system

We use BROMCOM for keeping school attendance records. Parents are able to check their child's attendance using the MCAS app which links to BROMCOM.

Registration marks will be recorded for each lesson and where students are absent, action will be taken to resolve this.

### 7. Punctuality

We recognise the importance of good punctuality and expect students to arrive at school on time every day. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.50 am. The afternoon registration will be at 13:40pm.

The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical/dental appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Any student who is late will attend a 20 minute Late 'Reflection' period at the end of the same day they were late. Students who are persistently late may be invited to attend a Welfare Meeting with their parents/carers to discuss issues of punctuality with the Attendance Officer and/or the Progress Leader for their year group.

## 8. Reasons for absence

Whilst we recognise that sometimes absence is unavoidable, we can only authorise a limited number of reasons for student absence.

Acceptable reasons for absence include:

- Medical appointments (All appointments, wherever possible, should be taken outside school hours)
- Medical procedures / recovery
- Illness or injury – the student is too unwell to attend school (medical evidence may be requested for prolonged or frequent periods of illness)
- Where the student has been advised not to attend by a medical practitioner (school may require evidence of this)
- An infectious illness or disease that should not be passed to others (including COVID).
- A day set aside for Observance by the religious body to which the students' parents belong.
- To attend a job or college interview which cannot be organised outside school hours.
- To take part in approved public performances.
- To take part in approved sporting events or public exams.
- A "exceptional circumstance" agreed in advance

Unacceptable reasons for absences include:

- Birthdays
- Minding the house/waiting for deliveries or tradesmen
- Shopping
- Uniform not available/in the wash
- Looking after siblings
- Oversleeping
- Parents needing support
- Term-time holidays

## 9. Authorising absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, initially by a phone call/email to the school Attendance Officer, or using the My Child At School (MCAS) app.

### Authorised absence

Alderman White School is unable to authorise any absence during term time unless the reason is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. **Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.**

Medical appointments should be taken outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum time possible. Parents must notify the school in advance of any planned medical/dental appointment and may be asked to provide evidence of the appointment to the Attendance Officer.

### Unauthorised absence



This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This is likely to be caused when:

- There is no parental explanation
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation for absence

## 10. Application for Leave of Absence

The Headteacher can only authorise a leave of absence during term time in **exceptional circumstances**. This does not usually include holidays during term time.

All leave of absence requests will be decided on a case by case basis by the Headteacher. It will be up to the discretion of the Headteacher as to if the request constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance'. Circumstances which may be considered exceptional include:

- A family event such as a wedding or funeral
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Travel to observe a religious event that cannot be taken outside of school hours

If a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, this must be made in writing using the Leave of Absence Request form (found on the school website) at least four weeks in advance of the date of absence, or as much notice as possible. This must be agreed prior to the absence being taken.

Where a Leave of Absence is not authorised, a referral may be made to the Attendance Enforcement Team. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. (See Section 13).

## 11. Unplanned Absence – Procedures

### First Day Absence

On the first day of absence and every day after, the parents/carers should contact the school and inform the Attendance Officer of the reason for absence by phone, email or the My Child At School app (MCAS) by 8:30am. If no contact is made with school, the Attendance Officer will contact home to inform parents/carers of the absence and to discover the reason for the absence. We will use all contacts provided when trying to make contact regarding attendance and may make a visit to the home if deemed necessary.

### Subsequent Days of Absence

The parent should contact the school on the morning of each day of absence if the absence goes beyond the first day unless a doctor's note has been provided which identifies a specified period of absence, or a period of absence has been agreed.

### Third Day Absence

If, after the third day of absence, there has been no contact with parents/carers, a home visit will take place. If contact remains unsuccessful, a letter will be sent requesting immediate contact with school to explain the absence.

### Continuing absence of five days or more

If there is no response to the letter, the Attendance Officer may undertake a further home visit, without prior notice, and will then take further appropriate action which will include a referral to the Nottinghamshire County Council School Attendance Team.

A referral will automatically be made to Nottinghamshire County Council Children Missing Officer, no later than day 10 of an absence if there is no explanation for absence and all checks to locate a missing student have been completed. These checks will include further home visits and contact with other professionals and family members to assist in locating a missing student.

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of pastoral staff including tutors to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the student and their parents/carers, usually by inviting them to attend a Welfare Meeting with a member of the Pastoral team. If there is no improvement further support will be offered, but the parents/carers may also be at risk of a fixed penalty notice or being prosecuted in court if there is no acceptable reason for the absence.

### **Return from Absence**

Where there has been an extended absence, the school will consider bespoke support to help the student reintegrate back into school.

## **12. School reluctance and refusal**

Some students may occasionally be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Where a student refuses to attend school, the parent and child will be invited in to school for a meeting with the Progress Leader for their year group. The purpose of the meeting will be to identify any barriers to attendance and discuss strategies to support a successful reintegration to school.

## **13. Enforcement**

If a child has 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within any-ten-week period, the school may refer the absence to the Nottinghamshire School Attendance Enforcement Team who may issue a penalty notice.

A penalty notice is issued to **each parent** who is considered legally responsible for the child. The penalty is a fine of £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 after 21 days but must be paid within 28 days.

If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the local authority has no option but to prosecute in the Magistrates' Court. This could lead to a fine of up to £2,500. Schools do not receive the money from any fines issued.

There is no right of appeal against an Education Penalty Notice once it has been issued. If a parent believes that their child's leave of absence was not properly understood and that it should have been considered as exceptional by the Headteacher, the parent should make contact with the school directly. School will always work together with families to support the good attendance of our pupils.

## Appendix 1: DfE Approved Attendance Codes

The following national codes are used to record attendance information.

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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays