



23 October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

I am contacting you this week to highlight some important changes regarding the recording of attendance and punctuality to school for all students on roll at Also High School. School attendance remains a crucial area for all students as the link between school attendance and attainment is proven, and it is clear that some students are limited in their progress by the fact that too many students are not in school on too many days.

Students who attend Also High School have an attendance target of 97% and any level of attendance below this is not an acceptable level of attendance. Where attendance reaches 95%, this means that almost two whole weeks of important learning has been missed over the academic year. Where attendance reaches 90%, students achieve, on average, 1 full GCSE grade below their expected grade, and when attendance reaches 85% it increases to 2 full GCSE grades, and so on. It goes without saying that low attendance leads to a reduced likelihood of students gaining the GCSEs that they deserve.

Important Changes to Attendance and Punctuality

Following recent changes to Government guidance, for any students arriving to school after 9am in the morning, I am informing you of how these may affect some of our families. As I have already said in this letter, attendance to school for some students is below where it should be. However, far too many students also arrive to school after 8.20am, missing vital learning and preparation time (see over) and missing the opportunity to embed good habits essential for life in work.

Where students arrive in school after 9.00am (30 minutes after the register opens) in the morning, students are now required to receive a U mark on the register which is classed as an unauthorised absence for the morning. This means that your child will be classed as absent from school in the morning if they arrive after this time, even if they arrive at this time, and it will be classed as an unauthorised absence. Furthermore, any family where their child is late for 10 days, and receives a U mark on the register, is at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice. Any genuine reasons for lateness will require medical evidence, etc for the absence to be authorised. You can address this, however, by ensuring your child arrives promptly to school for 8.20am and I would like to thank you in advance for your support in this matter.

These new arrangements will begin after the half term break (W/C 6 November 2023), and we have decided to phase them in gradually, with the cut off time starting at 10.00am in the first instance. However, I would like to make it clear that this is not the target start time to school. Students are expected to be on site by 8.20am, and these new arrangements will be rigorously enforced to ensure they are consistently applied.

Yours sincerely

Mr J Thompson
Assistant Headteacher

Attendance Matters

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving children the best possible start in life. The aim should be to attend 100% of the time, however school attendance should not fall below 97% (this equates to 6 school days missed, or 30 lessons, in any academic year). Students who miss school frequently fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance also shows potential employers that a young person is reliable.

Research suggests that students who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime. Below is a table showing how children's percentage attendance equates to the amount of school time missed. It is also important to arrive at school on time. If a child arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time over one academic year.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Lessons
97%	6 days missed	30 lessons missed
95%	9 days missed	45 lessons missed
90%	19 days missed	95 lessons missed
85%	29 days missed	145 lessons missed
80%	38 days missed	190 lessons missed
70%	57 days missed	285 lessons missed
65%	67 days missed	335 lessons missed

Where attendance falls to 90% in any academic year, children on average achieve 1x GCSE grade below their target grade. Where attendance falls to 85%, this increases to 2 GCSE grades, and so on.

19 days absent from school a year could mean a drop in a GCSE grade in all subjects.

Each year group has a dedicated Attendance Officer who will support students to return to school as soon as possible. Attendance Officers will also deal with all matters related to your child's school attendance. They are:

Year 7	Julie Magee
Year 8	Emily Kirlew-Howe
Year 9	Claire Fletcher
Year 10	Ashlea Forgacs
Year 11	Kellie Upton
Sixth Form	Marie McCarty

Attendance Officers can be contacted on 0151 235 1200

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